THE

HISTORY

Serfojee Rajah 1830

OF

TWO ACTS,

ENTITLED

AN ACT FOR THE SAFETY AND PRESERVATION OF HIS MAJESTY'S PERSON AND GOVERNMENT AGAINST TREASONABLE AND SEDITIOUS PRACTICES AND ATTEMPTS,

AND

AN ACT FOR THE MORE EFFECTUALLY PREVENTING SEDITIOUS MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES;

INCLUDING THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT,

AND OF THE VARIOUS

POPULAR MEETINGS, SOCIETIES, AND CLUBS,

THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM;

WITH AN

Appendix and Index, &c.

TO WHICH ARE PREFIXED

REMARKS

ON THE

STATE OF PARTIES, AND OF PUBLIC OPINION,

DURING THE REIGN OF HIS PRESENT MAJESTY.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. AND J. ROBINSON, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1796.

PREFACE.

THE importance of theſe Bills has been univerſally acknowledged, both by thoſe who have ſupported, and thoſe who have reſiſted them; and the impreſſion they have made upon the public mind is a ſubject of the moſt ſerious conſideration, complicated as it is with circumſtances and events which are new in the annals of Great Britain. The queſtion of their propriety, juſtice, and expediency has been diſcuſſed with a gravity and preciſion becoming their ſuppoſed nature and conſequences; yet although that diſcuſſion occupied a greater portion of time than is uſually devoted to Acts of the Legiſlature, it has been doubted whether they have received from the public the conſideration they deſerve, or whether the ſenſe of the public has been fairly collected.

It is poſitively aſſerted, on the one hand, that they are an infringement on the conſtitutional liberties of the ſubject, which no exiſting circumſtances can juſtify. It is partly admitted, on the other hand, that they ſeem to have a coercive tendency on general liberty, yet they are rendered abſolutely neceſſary by the complexion of the times. Thoſe who are of the latter opinion, have gained their purpoſe. Thoſe who are of the former are diſpoſed to maintain their oppoſition, and they are not few in number nor deſpicable in talents. It muſt be acknowledged that they include men of the higheſt rank, men of the greateſt genius, and men of the moſt perſuaſive eloquence—ſome who have on all occaſions been jealous over the people's rights, and ſome who have been rouſed to a more active vindication of them by one of thoſe events which call forth latent zeal. It is but fair to allow that this formidable phalanx are ſincere,

ſince

ſince they riſk what others wiſh to preſerve, and it may be ſuſpected that their efforts will not be loſt, ſince they plead the cauſe of thoſe who are diſpoſed to complain.

As the moſt accurate information only can lead to the juſteſt deciſion, it occurred to the EDITOR of this VOLUME, that a COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS of theſe two Acts would aſſiſt the public in judging leiſurely and deliberately, how far what has been aſſerted by the contending parties is true, and how far the eſſential intereſts of the Conſtitution are involved. The information given in newſpapers is of a periſhable nature. Few have acceſs to all the papers, and thoſe who have ſeldom collect them with a view to future reference; the events of one day are rarely compared with thoſe of another; treacherous memories break the chain, and the reſult of periodical information amounts in moſt caſes but to a confuſed ſet of ideas, in which prejudice has a conſiderable ſhare. It was therefore thought neceſſary to collect from the papers ON BOTH SIDES, every document and evidence of a public or private nature, which ſeemed to tend in any important degree to throw a light upon the ACTS, their meaning and conſequence, or upon the ſtate of the public mind reſpecting them. The DEBATES OF PARLIAMENT it was eſpecially incumbent to give at great length and from the beſt authorities. The different REPORTS of them have accordingly been carefully compared, that the ſentiments of the ſeveral ſpeakers may be as correctly aſcertained as the circumſtances of the caſe will admit. The proceedings of the ſeveral COUNTIES, CITIES, TOWNS, BOROUGHS and other Aſſociations, are detailed from the atteſted accounts of the parties, collated with each other. In performing this part of his duty, the EDITOR is willing to own the obligations he owes to the periodical Journals, particularly the Times, Morning Chronicle, Telegraph, and True Briton, and to the accurate reports of Parliamentary proceedings

which

which are publiſhed in more enlarged forms. With ſuch aid he hopes he has been able to bring together every thing that has been publiſhed; yet it may poſſibly happen that he has overlooked an article, eſpecially if circulated in a leſs public manner than in general was the practice.

It may be neceſſary to add, that he did not in ſome caſes think it his duty to give certain details, when they bore internal evidence of groſs miſrepreſentation and vulgar abuſe. Yet even of theſe he has not withheld ſome ſuch ſpecimens as will ſatisfy his readers that they have loſt nothing by the omiſſion of others. One article he has ſuppreſſed by deſign; the KING-KILLING hand-bill, ſo frequently alluded to in the Debates. For this, however, it would be as abſurd to give as to demand an apology.

It was his wiſh that the arrangement of the articles ſhould be cloſely in the order of time, but from the difficulty of procuring them, and the neceſſity of not interrupting the labour of the preſs, this was in ſome inſtances impracticable. The Index, however, he truſts, will readily guide the reader to any parts or paſſages which are neceſſary to be conſulted in connection.

In this manner, the EDITOR flatters himſelf that he has brought into one point of view a maſs of evidence of the moſt intereſting nature, which, as far as the plan is executed with impartiality, will give to individuals, however diſtant from the ſeat of Government, ſuch a knowledge of the merits of this great queſtion, as may enable them to baniſh the conſiderations of prejudice, correct the errors of miſrepreſentation, and decide with boldneſs on the part which it is their duty to take at ſo ſerious a criſis. It cannot ſurely be a queſtion of trivial import, when we reflect that in whatever way the ſtruggle of opinions may terminate, the Conſtitution is in danger.

REMARKS

ON THE

STATE OF PARTIES, AND OF PUBLIC OPINION,

DURING THE REIGN OF HIS PRESENT MAJESTY,

ORIGINALLY ADDRESSED TO A GENTLEMAN HIGH IN OFFICE.

SIR,

WE mutually lament the cloudy aſpect of public affairs; we mutually acknowledge that diſcontent prevails, and that reſpect for Government has decayed; but in tracing the cauſes of theſe changes, we are not agreed: and my preſent deſign is to juſtify an opinion which I have taken up, and which is in many reſpects oppoſite to that which generally prevails. Whether right or wrong, I have not forgot to be reſpectful. If I do not convince, I hope I ſhall not offend.

An opinion has lately been propagated, and from a quarter to which attention is due, that there exiſts in this kingdom a party formidable chiefly by its numbers, yet ſupported by men of ſome abilities, the object of which is to erect a Republic on the ruins of Monarchy, and to introduce thoſe miſeries and that anarchy which have threatened the abſolute deſolation of France. It is likewiſe aſſerted, that the principles upon which theſe Republicans act have been borrowed from France, and that they are abhorrent to the genius and loyal principles of Engliſhmen: and laſtly, that there being an abſolute certainty, or a very ſtrong preſumption, that ſuch deſigns are meditated, it became the Legiſlature to enact new laws, for the more effectual preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, or, in other words, the Conſtitution as by law eſtabliſhed. I do not ſtop to point out a ſeeming inconſiſtency in theſe aſſertions, nor to examine how far danger can ariſe from what is abhorrent to the genius of Engliſhmen. From the whole, however, we may gather the nature of the alarm, or ſuſpicion, which has demanded freſh exertions.

It

It has not been said that all this is capable of demonstration, or of legal proof, for every attempt to procure such proof has hitherto failed. Yet such opinions are deserving of respect, because they point to dangers of infinite importance, and because, from various circumstances and appearances such a conclusion may be formed, as would perhaps satisfy the mind of an historian who should live at a period far distant from the scene of action. Such is the ingenious craft of political writers and speakers, that the same facts are often brought to support different conclusions, and a man who has a favourite proposition to establish, is seldom deficient in a shew of demonstration, which first deceiving himself, renders it tolerably easy for him to deceive others by the imposing air of conscious rectitude. How far the influence of Republican principles, just stated, is drawn from convincing evidence, and how far it is to be supported by argument, may be learned from the Parliamentary proceedings of this Volume. It has, however, occurred to me, that some light may be thrown upon one point in dispute, if we take a retrospect of the popular opinions which have prevailed, in a greater or less degree of extent and force, since the accession of our present Sovereign. The point I wish to contend is, shortly, that we are not indebted to the French nation for the *quantum* (be it what it may) of disaffection, or of Republican principles, which exist in this kingdom, and that those principles, and those associations and measures, now termed *Republican* or *Democratic*, or, if you will, *Jacobinical*, have been recommended in every Parliament, and in an immense variety of much esteemed and lawful writings, ever since the Revolution, and more particularly during the present reign. It would be strange, indeed, I suppose it would even be to some humiliating, if we were to be indebted to a nation of emancipated slaves for the first principles of liberty, and if, after enjoying for centuries a state of freedom to which the superior consequence and happiness of the nation are justly attributed, we should throw aside all experience, all history, all appeal to fact, all memory of our ancestors who have argued, fought, and died to establish freedom, and in our old age go to school to those who are but in their elements. As a contrary opinion, however, prevails, it remains to be examined, how far the principles of Republicanism have been derived from what has happened in France, and whether these principles which are now so much dreaded, are not the natural growth and production of our own country, and whether that growth has not been promoted by causes with which the Revolution of France has no necessary connection.

It

It is requiſite to premiſe, although this will come to be mentioned more particularly hereafter, that while I allow the exiſtence of a Republican party, I do not allow it in all the extent that has been marked out by the violence of prejudice. I believe that the Republicans are few in number, and that they are not ſupported by men of ſuch rank and conſequence, as to render their efforts very formidable at preſent. But it cannot be denied, that they may by perſeverance in proſelytiſm become really formidable; by employing the arts which all parties employ, they may delude and deceive; they may inculcate the habit of brooding over calamity, and of rioting in the luxury of complaint; they may increaſe prejudices, and give to miſrepreſentations the winning charm of ſimple truths. They may alſo rank among their number (and their enemies, indeed, have ſet them the example,) all that are diſcontented with the manner in which public affairs have been conducted for ſome years, and who at ſundry times, and eſpecially very lately, have contended for a Reformation in the Commons Houſe of Parliament.

Great pains have been lately taken to connect theſe two parties. All that ignorance can ſwallow, and all that impudence can thruſt down, have contributed to the opinion, that every man's actions tend to Republicaniſm, in proportion as his ſpeech betrays a diſlike of the meaſures of the preſent Adminiſtration, or a deſire of removing abuſes. But how does the caſe ſtand? The Republican party, it is believed, exiſt; but it is only a matter of belief, both as to the nature of their principles and the extent of their influence, whereas the friends of Reform are not more numerous than they are open and decided. They form themſelves into numerous ſocieties; and they publiſh their opinions in the accuſtomed vehicles of intelligence, ſigned by names that are real and known. They declare that their ſole object is a Reform of Parliament, and we have no proof that there lurks another object behind it. Many of his Majeſty's Miniſters have formerly been members of one or other of thoſe ſocieties, but ſince their coming into power, ſince their poſſeſſing the means to carry the principle into effect, you cannot ſay, that they have ſhewn the ſmalleſt diſpoſition to change the Conſtitution into a Republican form: The arguments indeed in favour of a Reform of Parliament have been urged at ſo many periods in the laſt and preſent reign, that I am not able to mention an eminent Stateſman, who at one time or other of his life has not contended for this ſuppoſed cure of all political maladies. That a meaſure recommended by ſo many eminent men, both in and out of power, ſhould now be the object of alarm and indigna-

tion,

tion, is, to ſay the leaſt, a curious phenomenon in the hiſtory of opinions, and that we ſhould argue upon the effect of an experiment which has never been tried is, I apprehend, not very conſiſtent either with the old or new philoſophy.

Scarcely had his preſent Majeſty aſcended the Throne of his anceſtors, when doubts were infuſed into the minds of his ſubjects reſpecting the ſyſtem of Goverment which was to be adopted. Changes took place in the Adminiſtration, which augured ill for the continuance of domeſtic peace, and that "happy extinction of parties" to which his Majeſty alluded in his firſt Speech. Mr. Pitt, who had conducted the war with conſummate ſkill and unexampled ſucceſs, thought himſelf obliged in honour and duty to reſign his office, becauſe he conceived it incompatible with thoſe great ties to remain in an Adminiſtration in which his opinion had loſt its weight. It is in vain that we now join the party of writers who attributed his conduct to pride and conceit. It was then in vain that his popularity was aſſailed by a penſion, a reward for ſervices that were not thought worth retaining, and that he was repreſented as a turbulent man, who wiſhed, without a reaſonable pretext, to involve the nation in a war with Spain. We ſhall gain nothing, Sir, if we place the common infirmities of nature againſt his ſagacity, and this is all that can be done. The conſequent matter of fact will be the ſame. Or right or wrong, from that moment, from the reſignation of a ſervant "given by the People to the King," a diſtinction was formed between the views of the Court and the intereſts of the People.

The firſt public expreſſion of their ill-humour (call it diſloyalty) appeared when his Majeſty viſited Guildhall. The ſullen ſilence which accompanied his proceſſion was changed into loud exclamations of joy and gratulation when the Ex-Miniſter appeared. The opinion, or principle, or whatever it may be called, which this tumult expreſſed, was confirmed by what happened in a very few weeks. The Miniſtry were compelled to declare war againſt Spain, Mr. Pitt's inſolence and conceit were forgotten, and it was thought expedient, in order to conduct this new war with ſucceſs, to adopt as much ſagacity and dignity as he had left among his late colleagues. The changes which afterwards took place in the Miniſtry added conſiderably to the popular diſcontents. Many Noblemen of high rank, diſguſted with the treatment they had received, and which was imputed to the intrigues of the Earl of Bute, formed a ſtrong body of oppoſition in Parliament, and combated the ſubſequent peace by ſuch arguments as created a powerful diviſion in the country againſt the meaſures of Adminiſtration. This is not

the place to enquire whether they were right or wrong; it suffices that their language was bold and imperious, and that to these circumstances in junction we are to trace the origin of the popular discontents of this reign.

Not a moment was allowed for respite; the Cyder Act gave occasion to revive the usual arguments against the system of Excise, and the clamour became so great as to compel Parliament to render the Act more palatable. This first victory was celebrated with every tumultuous demonstration of joy: in the mean time Lord Bute resigned. It was imputed to him that he had introduced a system of favouritism, and of general politics, very hostile to the principles of the Constitution, and which might prove dangerous to that happy union which, at the beginning of this reign, subsisted between the Court and the People. Lord Bute was not without his defenders, but the impression which his conduct left, such as I have stated it, remained undiminished many a distant year, was repeatedly asserted in Parliament, and acquired additional strength from subsequent occurrences. *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem non erat ratio.* Visible, or invisible, the influence of Lord Bute was supposed to predominate. The Ministry, not one or two sets only, were said to be selected, because they were of minds sufficiently pliant to be subservient to a concealed power; and on such occasions, a question of peculiar delicacy in itself, and of great risk in its consequences, was agitated with very little ceremony—namely, the power of the Crown to chuse its own Ministers. It was asserted, that the Crown should be directed in the exercise of this power by public motives, and not by private attachments. Nothing could surely give more uneasiness to the friends of peace and union, than to find the Monarchical share of authority thus disputed; and nothing can be more dangerous than to use an undefined privilege in such a manner as to provoke ingenious and subtle men to make the experiment of applying boundaries to it.

The press, that "tree of knowledge of good and evil," at this time teemed with publications, which, compared to what we have lately seen, may at least be deemed foul and gross libels, yet no notice was taken of them, until a writer, more bold than the rest, ventured to make an attack on his Majesty, by asserting that the Royal Speech contained a falsehood. In our days this is nothing, because the speech from the Throne is considered as the speech of the Minister; but at the time we are speaking of, it roused no small portion of indignation, and it was determined to prosecute the author, or supposed author, Mr. John Wilkes. He was a Member

of

of Parliament, diſappointed in certain expectations from Government, and of a character the leaſt promiſing in appearance, and yet the beſt formed in reality to run the career of popularity. Such a man as neglect would have confined to obſcurity was ſelected to be the object of Miniſterial vengeance. If we could ſuppoſe, what we are certainly not juſtified in ſuppoſing, that any Miniſters had formed a regular plan from the baſeſt motives, yet founded on a knowledge of human nature, to embroil their Sovereign in a diſpute with his People, to render his views ſuſpected, to weaken Government, and to overwhelm themſelves in diſgrace, ſuch Miniſters would have followed the preciſe plan which was now adopted. They would have advanced doubtful privileges and undefined prerogatives, and they would, like them, have been compleatly defeated by the operation of the law.

They firſt had recourſe to the practice of General Warrants. They iſſued a warrant to take up the Author, Printers, and Publiſhers of the libel, together with their papers, without ſpecially naming or deſcribing the criminals. In conſequence of this, Mr. Wilkes was apprehended and committed to the Tower; but the Court of Common Pleas determining that the privilege of Parliament had been violated in his perſon, he was releaſed. A proſecution, however, was commenced by the Attorney General, and Mr. Wilkes, in the mean time, was diſmiſſed from his command as Colonel of the Buckinghamſhire Militia. In November, 1763, the Miniſtry brought the affair into Parliament, where it was voted, that the North Briton, No. 45, was a "falſe, ſcandalous, and ſeditious libel, manifeſtly tending to alienate the affections of the people from his Majeſty, and to incite them to traitorous inſurrections." It was alſo voted, in flat contradiction to the deciſion of the Court of Common Pleas, that "the privilege of Parliament does not extend to the caſe of libel."

When the libel, in conſequence of an order of the Houſe of Commons, came to be burnt at the Royal Exchange, a dangerous riot enſued, and the Sheriffs and Peace Officers were handled with much ſeverity. In what a very ſerious light this appeared to the Parliament, is evident from their immediately reſolving, "that the rioters were diſturbers of the public peace, dangerous to the liberties of the country, and obſtructors of national juſtice," and an Addreſs was preſented to his Majeſty, requeſting that he would give directions for the puniſhment of the rioters.

Mr. Wilkes now ſaw, or thought he ſaw, that the ſenſe of the nation was with him; that the law and the mob were on his ſide, the firſt and laſt of all power and authority, and that conſequently

the wrath of Miniſters would prove impotent. With this confidence he brought his action againſt the Secretary of State for the ſeizure of his papers, and obtained a verdict of 1000l. damages, and full coſts of ſuit. All the inferior perſons apprehended in the ſame manner by Meſſengers, had ample damages awarded. The Publiſhers only of the North Briton were ſentenced to fine, impriſonment, and pillory; but the latter part of the puniſhment was converted by the public into a triumph, where profit kept pace with honour. At this time, the pillory was, to a man of ſmall fortune, a deſirable ſituation, although ſome did not improve it ſo much as others; but it was no puniſhment to any.

Nothing could be more humiliating to Mr. Wilkes's enemies than diſappointments like theſe; but a greater mortification was yet behind. On the trial of that Arch-libeller, Chief Juſtice Pratt took occaſion to declare, that General Warrants, except in caſes of High Treaſon, were illegal. And when a motion was made in the Houſe of Commons to the ſame purport, the Miniſtry loſt all courage; fear and ſhame prevented their giving a deciſion one way or other, and all they could do was to adjourn the queſtion for four months. This, which was carried by a ſmall majority, was celebrated over the kingdom as a triumph: the city of London took the lead in rejoicings, and in conferring the higheſt marks of reſpect upon the Lord Chief Juſtice, whoſe opinion ſeemed to have brought the important queſtion to a final and happy iſſue. It ought not to be omitted, as greatly tending to ſwell the popular torrent, that ſeveral Officers of the Army, ſome of high rank and diſtinguiſhed merit, were diſmiſſed from the ſervice, upon account of the votes they had given in Parliament, on the queſtion of General Warrants. It will be difficult in any given caſe to prove that this is wiſe; it will be far more ſo to prove that, in the caſe before us, it was well-timed.

But the Miniſtry could not yet perceive, that the tendency of their meaſures muſt ultimately heap diſgrace upon diſgrace, and all that juſtice requires us to ſay in their favour is, that they were as regardleſs of themſelves as of the honour and reputation of their Sovereign.—During Mr. Wilkes's abſence in France, they voted him guilty of writing and publiſhing the North Briton, and expelled him from his ſeat in the Houſe of Commons. On the ſame day, a complaint was made againſt him, in the Houſe of Peers, by Lord Sandwich, for printing an obſcene Poem, which he never publiſhed, but to which he had affixed notes, pretended to be written by Dr. Warburton, the celebrated Biſhop of Glouceſter. This affair probably loſt Mr. Wilkes the opinion of ſome of the people; but

others

others could not fail to mark the coincidence of character between the accuser and the accused, and it was generally believed that something of a different nature from pious indignation, had induced the Noble Lord to become the advocate of chastity.

Notwithstanding the formidable obstruction of an outlawry, Mr. Wilkes appeared on the Hustings in Guildhall, at the General Election in 1768, as a candidate to represent the metropolis. Failing in this, for the Citizens were not prepared to bestow their highest honour upon him, he stood candidate for the county of Middlesex, and was elected by a great majority. All this time he remained unmolested by the Ministry. Had not their policy been far removed from either wisdom, or experience, they had it in their power, by absolute neglect, or by timely severity, to have rendered him a man of much less consequence with the people; but instead of this, they contrived, by a strange fatality, to bind his fate with that of the people more closely than ever. It is certain that he solicited a pardon in the most submissive language; and had it been accorded to his request, it must have formed an obligation which he could not honourably evade; or, if the determination had been to refuse it, they might have proceeded upon the outlawry, and confined him immediately upon his arrival, which would have probably prevented the steps he was about to take. His outlawry, however, was reversed, and for the two libels he was sentenced to two years imprisonment, to pay a fine of 1000l. and find security for his good behaviour for the space of seven years. The populace were sufficiently turbulent on this occasion: they pressed round the prison, insulted the Magistrates, and a military force was employed to disperse them. Several of the rioters were killed, or, in the popular phrase, murdered, and one of them was buried with great pomp, his grave covered with a costly stone, on which are inscribed words that in our days would appear to smack not a little of Treason and Sedition.

But Mr. Wilkes, though in prison, was so little touched with the severity of his sentence, that his first production was a libel on the Secretary of State, relative to the riots and military execution which followed. The House of Commons voted this "an insolent, scandalous, and seditious libel," and upon motion he was a second time expelled the House. A new Writ was issued, and a second time he was chosen Member for Middlesex. The House now resolved, that, "having been once expelled, he was incapable of sitting in the same Parliament, and the election was therefore void." The Freeholders of Middlesex chose him a third time, which election was also declared void; but to put an end to this unequal contest,

 Colonel

Colonel Luttrel, already a Member of Parliament, vacated his ſeat, and ſtood candidate for Middleſex, and although he had only 296 votes, and Mr. Wilkes 1243, he was declared duly elected. This deciſion threw the nation into the greateſt commotion; it provoked writings, ſpeeches, petitions, and remonſtrances, which kept up the ſpirit of oppoſition to the meaſures of the Court for ſeveral years, and terminated in the total repeal of all the proceedings of Parliament. In 1782 it was ordered by the Houſe of Commons that all the declarations, orders, and reſolutions of that Houſe, reſpecting the election of John Wilkes, Eſq. to be elected a Member to ſerve in the ſaid Parliament, ſhould be expunged from the Journals of the Houſe, as being ſubverſive of the rights of the whole body of electors of the kingdom.

In the mean time, Mr. Wilkes received the moſt ſubſtantial proofs of popular favour. His friends formed themſelves into ſocieties for the payment of his debts, and for keeping alive in the minds of the people thoſe rights which were violated in his perſon. He ſucceſſively roſe to all the civic honours, and at length was appointed to an office of great emolument; but having grown callous to the public cauſe, and by a ſtrange tranſition, becoming, in their opinion, a Tory and a Courtier, he ſunk in the eſtimation of his conſtituents, who, at the laſt general election, rejected his offer with contempt. He is a wonderful inſtance, and perhaps the only one in our hiſtory, of a man riſing to the higheſt conſequence, honours, and riches, merely by having been the victim of Miniſterial vengeance. So blinded were the ſeveral Miniſters who undertook to continue the ſyſtem of perſonal pique, that they enabled him, with little effort of his own, and merely by keeping up the appearance of zeal and patriotiſm, at once to lay the public under obligation, and under contribution.

This was the age of ſeditious libels. JUNIUS appeared, a writer more formidable than Wilkes, more brilliant, more faſcinating; if poſſible, more rancorous and acrimonious, and who added to his natural advantages the veil of impenetrable ſecreſy. No writings were ever read with greater avidity, credited with more confidence, or quoted with greater triumph. He attacked not only the Miniſtry, but all perſons connected with them; yet the bent of his rancour was peculiarly towards his Majeſty. It may be affirmed, with little hazard of contradiction, that nothing has appeared in our days (the King-killing hand-bill excepted) more tending "to ſtir up the people to hatred or contempt of the perſon of his Majeſty." I wiſh I could add that they were not ſucceſsful. But no man, ignorant of the perſonal virtues of our Monarch, could

then,

then, or can now, when these letters seem to have acquired fresh popularity, read them without retaining the most unfavourable impressions. Yet they were long printed and most extensively circulated without attracting the serious notice of his Ministers. One letter only, addressed to the King, was made the subject of a prosecution, and here unfortunately the same blind policy which dictated all the proceedings against Wilkes, prevailed in connecting Junius with the public interest. The Attorney General filed a bill *ex officio* against Mr. Woodfall, the publisher. Lord Mansfield, who presided on the trial, on summing up the evidence, informed the Jury, that the fact of publication was all that came under their cognizance; the question of libel or no libel being a mere question of law to be decided by the Court. The Jury answered this argument by returning their verdict, " Guilty of printing and publishing *only*," and Woodfall was acquitted. The public mind was now agitated on the question of libels and the rights of juries; a great variety of able writers appeared on the popular side; Junius joined them, and thus a new battery was opened upon the Court. Libellers became more bold, public authority was disregarded, and to threaten with the pillory was to hold out the prospect of a reward.

But the decision of the House of Commons respecting the Middlesex Election still remained the principal objection to the political system of the times, because it was foreseen that its consequences might be generally felt, and gradually deprive the whole body of electors of their franchise. The freeholders of Middlesex, the citizens of London and Westminster, the county of York, and fourteen other principal counties, petitioned his Majesty against the measures pursuing by his Ministers. A few Addresses, in favour of them, were procured with considerable difficulty, and a body of Merchants of the city of London, who went to Court with a Counter-address, were treated with the utmost insolence by the populace. Indictments were preferred against some of these rioters, but were all thrown out by the Grand Jury. The Gazette, however, was for some weeks filled with Addresses from Boroughs and Corporations, abounding in professions of loyalty, and representing the people to be in little less than a state of rebellion. Such language, echoed from place to place, could not fail to aggravate the evil. Had it been believed that the fact was really so, what remained but the most decisive measures on the part of Administration to quell this actual or incipient rebellion? They were fortunately, however, too well acquainted with the genius of Addresses, to take any step of that kind, and knew at the same time,

that

that the aſſertion which is falſe does not become true, by being circulated from borough to borough. Addreſſes merely profeſſing principles of loyalty, when they come quickly and ſpontaneouſly, are always acceptable proofs of the peaceful ſtate of a country, when there is nothing to place in oppoſition to them. But when they enter into diſcuſſions of another kind, it becomes neceſſary to conſider the evidence they carry with them. In this caſe, it amounted to an abſurdity. Here was a nation abounding in loyalty, and ripe for rebellion.

As the Middleſex Petition contained a liſt of all the grievances of which the people had for the laſt ſix or ſeven years complained, it may be neceſſary to exhibit, under one view, the various cauſes of that diſaffection which then prevailed, and has often been revived during the preſent reign. Theſe Petitioners aſſerted that they had ſeen Engliſh ſubjects, and even a member of the Britiſh Legiſlature, arreſted by virtue of a General Warrant iſſued by a Secretary of State, contrary to the law of the land; their houſes rifled and plundered, their papers ſeized, and uſed as evidence upon trial; their bodies committed to cloſe impriſonment; the Habeas Corpus eluded; trial by Jury diſcountenanced, and the firſt Law-officer of the crown publicly inſinuating that Juries are not to be truſted; printers puniſhed by Miniſtry in the Supreme Court, without a trial by their equals—without any trial at all; the remedy of the law for falſe impriſonment barred and defeated. The plaintiff and his attorney, for their appeal to the law of the land, puniſhed by expences and impriſonment, and made by forced engagements, to deſiſt from their legal claim. A writing determined to be a libel by a Court where it was not cognizable in the firſt inſtance, contrary to law, becauſe all appeal is thereby cut off, and inferior Courts and Juries influenced by ſuch predetermination. A perſon condemned in the ſaid Court as the author of the ſuppoſed libel unheard, without defence or trial. Unjuſt treatment of Petitions, by ſelecting only ſuch parts as might be wreſted to criminate the Petitioners, and refuſing to hear thoſe which might procure him redreſs. The thanks of one Branch of the Legiſlature propoſed by a Miniſter to be given to an acknowledged offender for his offence, with the declared intention of ſcreening him from law. Attachments wreſted from their original intent of removing obſtructions to the proceedings of law, to puniſh by ſentence of arbitrary fine and impriſonment, without trial or appeal, ſuppoſed offences committed out of Court. Perpetual impriſonment of an Engliſhman, without trial, conviction, or ſentence, by the ſame mode of attachment, wherein the ſame perſon is at once party, ac-

cuſer,

cuſer, Judge, and Jury. Inſtead of the ancient and legal civil police, the military introduced at every opportunity, unneceſſarily and unlawfully, patroling the ſtreets, to the alarm and terror of the inhabitants. The lives of many of your Majeſty's innocent ſubjects deſtroyed by military execution. Such military execution ſolemnly adjudged to be legal. Murder abetted, encouraged, and rewarded. The civil Magiſtracy rendered contemptible by the appointment of improper and incapable perſons. The civil Magiſtrates tampered with by Adminiſtration, and neglecting and refuſing to diſcharge their duty. Mob and riots hired and raiſed by the Miniſtry, in order to juſtify and recommend their own illegal proceedings, and to prejudice your Majeſty's mind by falſe inſinuations againſt the loyalty of your Majeſty's ſubjects. The freedom of election violated by corrupt and undue influence, by unpuniſhed violence and murder. The juſt verdicts of Juries, and the opinion of the Judges, overruled by falſe repreſentations to your Majeſty, and the determinations of the law ſet aſide by new, unprecedented, and dangerous means; thereby leaving the guilty without reſtraint, and the injured without redreſs, and the lives of your Majeſty's ſubjects at the mercy of every ruffian protected by Adminiſtration. Obſolete and vexatious claims of the Crown ſet on foot for partial and election purpoſes. Partial attacks on the liberty of the preſs; the moſt daring and pernicious libels againſt the Conſtitution, and againſt the liberty of the ſubject, being allowed to paſs unnoticed, whilſt the ſlighteſt libel againſt a Miniſter is puniſhed with the utmoſt rigour. Wicked attempts to increaſe and eſtabliſh a ſtanding army, by endeavouring to veſt in the Crown an unlimited power over the militia; which, ſhould they ſucceed, muſt, ſooner or later, ſubvert the Conſtitution, by augmenting the power of Adminiſtration in proportion to their delinquency. Repeated endeavours to diminiſh the importance of Members of Parliament individually, in order to render them more dependent on Adminiſtration collectively. Even threats having been employed by Miniſters to ſuppreſs the freedom of debate; and the wrath of Parliament denounced againſt meaſures authoriſed by the law of the land. Reſolutions of one Branch of the Legiſlature, ſet up as the law of the land, being a direct uſurpation of the rights of the two other Branches, and therefore a manifeſt infringement of the Conſtitution. Public money ſhamefully ſquandered and unaccounted for, and all enquiry into the cauſe of arrears in the Civil Liſt prevented by the Miniſtry. Inquiry into a Paymaſter's public accounts ſtopped in the Exchequer, though the ſums unaccounted for by that Paymaſter amounted to above forty millions ſterling. Public loans perverted

to private Minifterial purpofes. Proftitution of public honours and rewards to men who can neither plead public virtue nor fervices. Irreligion and immorality, fo eminently difcountenanced by your Majefty's royal example, encouraged by Adminiftration both by example and precept. The fame difcretion has been extended by the fame evil Counfellors to your Majefty's dominions in America, and has produced to our fuffering fellow-fubjects in that part of the world, grievances and apprehenfions fimilar to thofe of which we complain at home.

I fhall not, nor is it neceffary for my purpofe, that I fhould examine into the truth or falfehood of thofe affertions. They all have fome foundation, be it ftronger or weaker, in events which happened within a few years of each other, and were detailed in the Journals, and difcuffed in the other publications of the time, and perhaps with more certainty of information, in the Parliamentary proceedings. That fome of them are exaggerated, may be readily believed. Where is the complainant that does not amplify his fufferings? But whatever degree of credit they may be found entitled to from hiftorical inveftigation, they then formed the declaration of war againft the Miniftry, the people proceeded upon them as facts, and more anarchy and confufion reigned at that time than has been known fince. The reafon of this is obvious; it is to be lamented that it is not remembered. The Miniftry bluftered and retracted; the people perfifted and were fuccefsful. The city of London was on their fide, and the conduct of this city is highly important, becaufe it attracts notice and imitation; almoft every Jury decided for the fame intereft; the people in other parts of the kingdom, wherever their opinions were collected, formed a majority againft the meafures of the Court; and upon a great variety of occafions, their ill-humour manifefted itfelf in acts to which you may with fome propriety apply the modern language of *traitorous* and *feditious*. I fhall not felect an inftance from the mob; their ignorance is fome extenuation, and they feldom are graceful even where their indignation is virtuous. But I will remind you of the Lord Mayor of London, who (in 1773) difcontinued the practice of going to St. Paul's on the 30th of January. What fhould we think of the ftate of the country, were the citizens of London now to acquiefce in a fimilar conduct? What feditious publication of our times contains an inuendo like this? The late infults offered to his Majefty were perpetrated by the loweft orders of fociety, by men fo obfcure as not to be known, and who were prompted, if prompted at all, by men of as little eftimation with the public; but here is the firft municipal officer of the kingdom,

dom breaking through a cuſtom, at a time when ſuch obſervance were ſignificant of the ſtate of the public mind, to direct an inſinuation of the moſt dangerous kind againſt his Majeſty's Perſon and Government. It is true he was cenſured for it by the Miniſterial writers of the day, but what one party condemned, another party applauded as a well-timed hint, and as the beſt poſſible method of commemorating the death of Charles I.

Some years before this, when the City of London addreſſed his Majeſty on the birth of a third ſon, they expreſſed their "readineſs to exert their utmoſt abilities in ſupport of ſuch wiſe councils, as apparently tended to render his Majeſty's reign happy and glorious, whenever a happy eſtabliſhment of public meaſures ſhould preſent a favourable occaſion." This language, it muſt be confeſſed, was not reſpectful; it was not courtly; it bears no reſemblance to what we have lately ſeen; but the queſtion in thoſe days was not a queſtion of compliment. They conſidered only how far they could go lawfully, and they went that far; and what was lawful for the City of London was a precedent for the reſt of the nation. The addreſſes, remonſtrances, and petitions of the City of London, at this period, were conceived in the true ſpirit of reſiſtance: they complained of a corrupt Miniſtry, and a venal Parliament, and upon whatever occaſion that Miniſtry and Parliament condeſcended to anſwer their complaints, otherwiſe than by ſilent contempt, they were defeated. They plunged into meaſures which were impotent, and they held out threats which they could not execute. What they did, they either did too ſoon, and it was not wanted, or too late, and the effect was anticipated. "I will not ſay that what they did was always wrong, but it was always done at a wrong time." Ignorant of the Conſtitution they undertook to preſerve, they applied remedies where there was no diſeaſe, or created diſeaſes for which there was no remedy.

The memorable anſwer of the Lord Mayor, Beckford, might here be quoted as an inſtance of that boldneſs which animated the reſiſtance of the People. Highly diſpleaſing as we may ſuppoſe it to have been to the Court Party, it was long the favourite text of all popular diſcourſes. Conſidering it, however, impartially, it has little more than the merit of boldneſs. The Lord Mayor's buſineſs was to preſent his remonſtrance, and receive the anſwer. To ſuppoſe that his Majeſty would or ought to carry on a perſonal altercation in the Preſence Chamber was abſurd; but there was nevertheleſs ſomething in it which wonderfully pleaſed the People. It was new, ſtriking, and well timed; and as the ſpeaker died the ſame year in the ſervice of the People, they rewarded his memory

by

by a coſtly monument, on which are inſcribed the words he addreſſed to his Majeſty.

To keep alive the popular ferment, as if it were neceſſary to the dignity of the Miniſtry, they again involved themſelves in a diſpute from which, as uſual, they could only extricate themſelves with diſgrace. Complaints were made (1771) that the ſpeeches of Members of Parliament were miſrepreſented in the Newſpapers. Until this time it had not been uſual to print the ſpeeches of either Houſe of Parliament, unleſs in a very guarded and cautious manner: it was againſt the rules, and the Printers were liable to incur the diſpleaſure of the Houſe. But of late greater freedoms had been taken, and the ſpeeches were detailed in ſuch a manner as to give ſerious offence. The Houſe of Commons carried a motion, that two Printers, Wheble and Thomſon, ſhould appear to anſwer the complaint at the Bar of the Houſe. They diſregarded this and a ſecond ſummons, which was declared to be final, and the Serjeant at Arms was ordered to take them into cuſtody. The Printers abſconded, and a Royal Proclamation was iſſued, offering a reward of 50l. for apprehending them. Six other Printers, in the mean time, were ordered to the Bar, and five of them complying, were reprimanded and diſcharged; but the ſixth, Miller, was ordered to be taken into cuſtody for contempt of the Houſe. Wheble and Thomſon being apprehended were carried before Mr. Alderman Wilkes, who immediately diſcharged them, and bound them over to proſecute the perſon who apprehended them. Miller was likewiſe taken into cuſtody by the Meſſenger of the Houſe of Commons, and carried before the Lord Mayor, Croſby, and the Aldermen Wilkes and Oliver, at the Manſion Houſe, and the Serjeant at Arms attending to demand the priſoner, the Magiſtrates denied the legality of the warrant, and ordered the Meſſenger of the Houſe to be committed to priſon, but bail was given. The Magiſtrates received the thanks of the City of London for having ſupported the privileges and franchiſes of the City, and defended the Conſtitution.

The vote of the Houſe of Commons ordering the Printers to be apprehended had not been unanimous, and the moderate party now endeavoured to prevent the majority from purſuing a hopeleſs conteſt: but it does not always happen that thoſe who are convinced that they have gone too far, have the wiſdom to ſtop. It was in vain, therefore, to aſſure the Miniſtry, that theſe were not proper times to engage the honour of the Houſe in a diſpute with the City of London, and that it required no oracle to foreſee the conſequences that muſt naturally attend the ſilly and ridiculous meaſure which had

had involved them in the prefent difpute. Such arguments had no weight. The Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver, being Members of the Houfe, were ordered to attend in their places, where they juftified their conduct by an appeal to the franchifes of the City. A very great majority voted that they fhould be committed prifoners to the Tower. Mr. Wilkes was fummoned to attend at the Bar of the Houfe, but he declared, in a letter to the Speaker, that he could only attend as Member for the County of Middlefex. After much debate the Houfe ordered a new fummons for the 8th of April, but, afraid to meet with a man whom they had expelled, as unfit to fit among them, they appointed the 9th, as the firft day of meeting after the Eafter recefs. The Lord Mayor and his fellow-prifoner lived in fplendour, at the expence of the City, until the clofe of the Seffion, when they were welcomed to their refpective homes with acclamations and enthufiaftic veneration little fhort of phrenzy.

And what was gained by this difgraceful proceeding? Another victory, you will fay, on the part of the People: yes, and the moft important victory they ever gained. From this time the debates and protefts of Parliament began to be given at length, and without the fubterfuge of dafhes and innuendos. This liberty, it is true, has not been recognized by Parliament, but it has never been interrupted, and the privilege of excluding the People from the gallery of the Houfe of Commons, although poffeffed by every individual Member, is exercifed only in cafes of peculiar delicacy, and to the public of little or no importance. Since this period the progrefs of political knowledge among the People has been very rapid, and the connection betwixt a Member and his Conftituents has become more intimate, and, I may add, more rational; they learn to appreciate his fervices with more accuracy, and he is taught to refpect their privileges by knowing that he is indirectly heard by them. It has been, indeed, urged again and again, that much mifchief is done by the publication of the debates of Parliament, that, particularly in time of war, the enemy derives ftrength and encouragement from the language and fentiments of the party in oppofition. This objection, as now ftated, carries confiderable weight; for it may be afferted with great truth, that the Americans did derive fuch encouragement from the advocates of their liberties in Parliament, as they could not have found in their own refources. Yet when all is conceded on this point, which can be required by the moft devoted friend to exifting Adminiftrations (and fome men are friendly to every thing in that fhape), it will ftill remain to be afked, whether the good arifing from the diffufion of fuch know-

ledge

ledge and information as Parliament can give does not greatly preponderate; and whether, upon the whole, the practice is hostile to any men or measures that are in themselves wise and good? But these questions are, in fact, gone to sleep. The public has decided in its own favour, and no infringement on the freedom of publishing the proceedings of Parliament has been attempted since the period we have been speaking of, when the Ministry, in their eagerness to curtail the Liberty of the Press, stumbled upon the means which happened to be the best calculated to enlarge it.

It would extend this letter far beyond the bounds to which it is necessary to confine it, were I to detail all the events of those times which manifested the most determined opposition, on the part of the city of London, and a very considerable proportion of the kingdom at large, to the views of the Court and Ministry. It would indeed require a volume as large as that I have presented to the Public, to give but a brief account of all the battles and skirmishes which took place between the contending parties, and it affords a memorable lesson to future Administrations, that in all these contests the people were, either immediately or finally, compleatly victorious. Such must ever be the case where privilege contends with law, where that which no one can explain is opposed to that which every one can understand.

I have mentioned the influence of the publication of the speeches of Parliament, and it is a subject which demands a little farther attention. It comes now to be considered that the grievances of the kingdom were not made a subject of complaint only by popular societies, self-elected, and unconstituted, by clubs in taverns, or mobs in fields; although these are not things in themselves despicable. Let us consider that the same complaints, if not felt personally, were reiterated officially by men of the first talents, patriotism and rank, that ever adorned either House of Parliament, by some who have gone to the grave with every mark of grief and dignified respect, which a nations's tears and a nation's splendour could bestow, and by some who have since risen to be the favourites of their Sovereign, and have died in his service. Sentiments backed by such men, it is to be hoped, will be received at least with respect. Complaints by men of tempers not naturally querulous, may be supposed to have a foundation; and political doctrines from the man of approved wisdom and tried patriotism, cannot die with him. In fact, the tenour of all those doctrines which were propagated by the speeches of the Opposition from 1765 to 1782, yet remains; when they are remembered, it is with gratitude, when they are quoted,

it is with the weight of authority, and the force of conviction "Let us be cautious," ſaid Lord Chatham, "how we admit an idea, that our rights ſtand on a footing different from thoſe of the people. Let us be cautious how we invade the liberties of our fellow ſubjects, however mean, however remote; for be aſſured, my Lords, that in whatever part of the empire you ſuffer ſlavery to be eſtabliſhed, whether it be in America or in Ireland, or here at home, you will find it a diſeaſe which ſpreads by contact, and ſoon reaches from the extremities to the heart. The man who has loſt his own freedom, becomes from that moment an inſtrument in the hands of an ambitious Prince, to deſtroy the freedom of others. Theſe reflections, my Lords, are but too applicable to our preſent ſituation. The liberty of the ſubject is invaded, not only in provinces, but here at home. The Engliſh people are loud in their complaints: they proclaim with one voice the injuries they have received; they demand redreſs and depend upon it, my Lords, that one way or other they *will have* redreſs. They will never return to a ſtate of tranquillity untill they *are* redreſſed, *nor ought they*; for in my judgment, my Lords, and I ſpeak it boldly, it were better for them to periſh in a glorious contention for their rights, than to purchaſe a ſlaviſh tranquillity at the expence of a *ſingle iota* of the Conſtitution." Such language as this could not fail to invigorate the means uſed by the People to obtain redreſs.

But the American war was the event which, of all others, gave a tone to the ſentiments of the nation different from what they had ever expreſſed, and which threw a diſmal colouring over the tranſactions of this reign. It was begun, while a great degree of diſaffection was viſible among the People. It was founded upon claims which could not be defined. They were puſhed by force, and they were defeated by force. From the vaſt maſs of reaſoning employed on this ſubject, from all that the ranſacked ſtores of hiſtory could afford, and all that the lively genius of theoriſts could invent, to involve, perplex, and keep the main queſtion out of view, we ſtill may give as the eſſence of the whole diſpute, that the Miniſtry aſſerted a right to tax the Americans againſt their conſent, and the Americans denied the exiſtence of any ſuch right. This was not a diſpute between two rival nations about a barren rock, or a fiſhing bank, or whether veſſels ſhall ſail in a river which belongs to neither of them. It was a diſpute between a Sovereign and his ſubjects. It was a trial how far force can aid, or ſupply the place of right.

It muſt be allowed, and yet it is but a poor conſolation, that this conteſt was not entered into raſhly, or upon ſlight grounds. Ten

years paſſed in unavailing attemps to heal the unhappy breach, during which it preſented various appearances. He who ſtudies its hiſtory, and not to ſtudy it is in an Engliſhman both a crime and a folly, will often be tempted to exclaim, "Why was *this* apportunity neglected? Why *this* advice not taken? Why *this* application treated with diſdain, and *theſe* terms rejected as bad in themſelves, merely becauſe they might not happen to be the beſt in theory?" It is certain, that as far as human wiſdom can judge of paſt events, as far as it is not puerile to ſpeculate upon a different ſeries of events than what actually took place, it may be with ſome confidence aſſerted that there was a time, nay, more than once, when the diſpute might have been terminated with ſafety and advantage. But it is in vain that we catch a momentary ſatisfaction from conjectures like theſe; the pleaſing illuſion ſoon vaniſhes; and we are left to contemplate with indignation and aſtoniſhment, often with horror, a concourſe of meaſures which leſſened the honour we attempted to preſerve, brought the valour and reputation of the country into queſtion, taught ſubjects the doctrine of reſiſtance, and ſhook the throne to its centre.

In peruſing the hiſtory of this war, the incapacity of thoſe who carried it on may perhaps be in ſome meaſure excuſed, if we make allowances for the ſituation in which they ſtood. Their abilities though conſiderable, were not of the foremoſt kind. They could argue, they could threaten, and they were adepts in thoſe infamous arts by which a war is for a time rendered popular. They pleaded for the dignity of the nation, and the ſupremacy of Parliament. Ingratitude and rebellion were to be puniſhed. Theſe were high and impoſing ſounds. But it is not always wiſe, even where it is practicable, to perſuade a nation to go to war, unleſs for the purpoſe of ſelf-defence, which this was only in a ſecondary degree, if at all. Men may as well attempt to command the iſſues of life and death, as the fate of war. It is impoſſible to calculate its chances, and it is at beſt an object for which the maſs of the people pay ſo dearly, that they became much ſooner tired, than the promoters of it. Granting, however, that this war was neceſſary, it was undertaken at a time when ſomething almoſt as hoſtile as war prevailed in the kingdom, general diſcontent at the meaſures of Adminiſtration. Perhaps it was thought expedient to divert the ill-humour of the people into another channel, and unite them againſt a common enemy. If ſo, it was an unfortunate experiment, for the people had too much in common with that enemy, violated privileges, infringed rights, Petitions contemptuouſly rejected. Inſtead therefore

fore, of uniting againſt this common enemy, they blended their mutual grievances.

And here, Sir, we have again to conſider the effect of an extenſive circulation of the ſpeeches of Parliament. Was it nothing for the Americans to read the ſpeeches of ſo many of the Lords and Commons of Great Britain in their favour? Was it nothing to hear that their cauſe was adopted as the cauſe of liberty, and the unalienable rights of a free people? Was it nothing that they had ſo many men of the moſt brilliant talents and political knowledge, to put words into their mouths, and courage into their hearts? In all the hiſtory of Parliament for the laſt ſix years, I can find no language ſo decided, ſo bold, ſo popular, ſo (in compliance with the humour of the times I ſhall add) inflammatory. It cannot, on the other hand, be ſaid, that the Miniſtry were deficient in ability, or in argument. Their ſpeeches alſo were circulated with equal avidity, and read with conviction by the majority of the nation. Why then this difference in the effect? Why did they not damp the ardour of the Americans, while they gratified the pride of the Engliſh? For this plain reaſon: they were not followed up by correſponding actions. "The ſight of a red coat frightening the coloniſts," was a fine, lively expreſſion, cheering and animating; but the Royal army blocked up in Boſton by a General without powder, ſurpaſſed all flights of oratory. The Americans were repreſented to be taylors and coblers. 'Twas wonderful that ſuch armies as were commanded by Burgoyne and Cornwallis ſhould lay down their arms to taylors and coblers.

During this war, the national diſcontent had never abated in any conſiderable degree, and it was promoted, independent of the events of the war, for no man could derive much ſatisfaction from them, by certain meaſures adopted by Adminiſtration, which entitled them to the character juſtly, though rather coarſely given them by their Parliamentary opponents. The vigour of oppoſition encreaſed with their numbers, and their language was in the higheſt degree, what is now termed, inflammatory and ſeditious, but then was, and perhaps hereafter will be conſidered as neceſſary, conſtitutional, manly. Their chief ſtrength, however, appeared in the oppoſition to the war, in all its ſtages. On one occaſion, LORD CAMDEN uſed this language. "King, Lords, and Commons are grand and ſounding names: but King, Lords and Commons may become tyrants as well as others. Tyranny in one, or more, is the ſame; it is as lawful to reſiſt the tyranny of many as of one; this has been a doctrine known and acted upon in this country for ages. When the famous Selden was aſked by what ſtatute reſiſtance to tyranny

could

could be justified? His reply was, it is to be justified by the custom of England, which is a part of the law of the land. I will affirm my Lords, not only as a Statesman, Politician, and Philosopher, but as a common Lawyer, that you have no right to tax America. No man, agreeably to the principles of natural or civil liberty, can be divested of any part of his property without his consent, and where-ever oppression begins, resistance becomes lawful and right."

On a subsequent occasion, LORD CHATHAM, said, "It had been usual on occasions of public difficulty and distress, for the Crown to make application to that House, the great hereditary council of the nation, for advice and assistance. As it is the right of Parliament to give, so it is the duty of the Crown to ask it. But, on this day, and in this extreme momentous exigency, no reliance is placed on your councils; no advice is asked of Parliament; but the Crown, from itself, and by itself, declares an unalterable determination to pursue its own preconcerted measures. And what measures, my Lords? Measures which have produced hitherto nothing but disappointments and defeats. I cannot, I will not join in congratulation on misfortune and disgrace. This is a perilous and tremendous moment; it is not a time for adulation: the smoothness of flattery cannot save us in this rugged and awful crisis. It is now necessary to instruct the Throne in the language of truth."

After the defeat of General Burgoyne, he used these more pointed words. "The King's speech contained a most unfaithful picture of the state of public affairs; it had a specious outside, was full of hopes, while every thing within was full of danger. A system destructive of all faith and confidence had been introduced, within the last fifteen years at St. James's, by which pliable men, not capable men, had been raised to the highest posts of Government. A few obscure persons had obtained an ascendancy where no man should have a personal ascendancy, and by the most insidious means, the nation had been betrayed into a war of which they now reaped the bitter fruits."

In 1779, Mr. Fox said, that, "the plan of Government which had been in this reign invariably pursued, had been very early adopted. It was not the mere rumour of the streets that the King was his own Minister, the fatal truth was evident, and though denied by the Members of the Administration, it was propagated by their followers. It was a doctrine in the highest degree dangerous, as tending to relieve Ministers from their responsibility, and to transfer it to a personage who could not by the principles of our Constitution be called to an account. But, he said, it should be a

warning

warning to Sovereigns, that though in general the evils of a reign were, according to the principles of our Government, aſcribed to the wicked counſels of Miniſters, yet when theſe evils reach to a certain height, Miniſters are forgotten, and the Prince alone is puniſhed. Thus it was with the Royal Houſe of Stuart. CHARLES and JAMES had no doubt wicked Miniſters, to whom the errors of their reign were juſtly in a great degree to be attributed; yet the one loſt his life, and the other his crown. The patience of the people was not unlimited, and however paſſive for a time, they would at laſt do themſelves juſtice." I ſhould not have thought it fair to quote the language of *ſuch a man* as Mr. Fox, if this ſhort ſpeech had not diſcriminated between the actions of the Monarch and thoſe of his Miniſters. It was nearly about the ſame time Lord Gower, who had been Preſident of the Council, ſaid, "He had preſided ſome years at the Council Table, where he had ſeen ſuch things paſs that no man of honour or conſcience could any longer ſit there."

I might multiply quotations of this kind; it was the common language of Parliament, from whence it deſcended to books, newſpapers, pamphlets, and common converſation: it was the popular creed adopted by the Americans at war, and by the Engliſh who were diſcontented. It is mentioned here neither with approbation nor cenſure; it may be wrong to appeal too often to the "extreme medicine of the Conſtitution;" it may be wrong to carry jealouſy to exceſs, for it is apt to become a blind and hateful paſſion. But enough appears upon record to ſhew that ſuch doctrines are not new, nor the growth of France; are not to be traced to the fields of Iſlington, nor the ſhops of the "majeſtic Bookſellers of the People." They originated in the Senate, and what paſſes in the Senate carries authority; and will, more or leſs, on all occaſions guide the opinions of the People. I have heard you reſent this; you think it unwiſe to be permitted, and pernicious in its conſequence, and you make diſtinctions betwixt the privilege of ſpeech in and out of Parliament. Would it then be better to make a law that the Members of Parliament ſhall be unanimous—or, that their proceedings ſhall remain a profound ſecret? Such a meaſure would certainly anſwer the intended purpoſe, and I know of but one objection, namely, that it is IMPOSSIBLE.

Nor were the cenſures on the Court and Miniſtry confined merely to alluſions or vague aſſertions in Parliament, which might be aſcribable to temporary warmth, and might die in the utterance. Regular plans were propoſed, and motions brought forward, to carry into effect reforms, without which it was ſuppoſed

the nation could not be ſaved. Before we ſpeak, however, of ſuch tranſactions as indicated caution and prudence, let us obſerve that the doctrine of reſiſtance, ſo often preached from high authority, had not only been practiſed in North America but in Ireland. This country had long complained of various grievances without obtaining redreſs, and the People at length roſe to the number of 50,000, paſſed reſolutions in favour of their manufactures, &c. and, with arms in their hands, obtained in a ſhort time the whole of their demands. The pretext for riſing was in defence of their coaſts from any attack the French might make, but the poſſeſſion of power is ſeldom enjoyed without the full exerciſe of it. I leave you, Sir, to judge whether, if any body of men had lately riſen in a ſimilar manner upon account of any grievance, real or imaginary, they would not have been deemed guilty of high treaſon. If it be illegal to meet unarmed to diſcuſs ſuch grievances, becauſe danger *may* ariſe, what muſt it be to meet fully armed when danger cannot well be avoided? I think I am ſupported here by very high authority. Lord Chief Juſtice Eyre, in his charge to the Grand Jury, October 2, 1794, ſays, "Thus far is clear; a force upon the Parliament muſt be immediately directed againſt the King, who is an integral part of it; it muſt reach the King, or it can have no effect at all. Laws are enacted in Parliament by the King's Majeſty, by and with the advice and conſent of the Lords and Commons in Parliament aſſembled. A force meditated againſt the Parliament is, therefore, a force meditated againſt the King, and ſeems to fall within the caſe of a force meditated againſt the King, to compel him to alter the meaſures of his Government; but, in that caſe, it does not appear to me that I am warranted by the authorities to ſtate to you, as clear law, that the mere conſpiracy to raiſe ſuch a force, and the entering into conſultations reſpecting it, will alone, and without actually raiſing the force, conſtitute the crime of high treaſon." Now, Sir, I apprehend this was preciſely what the Iriſh did; they were in force, and that force "meditated againſt Parliament, which was a force meditated againſt the King," by means of which the meaſures of Government were altered, although not to the fulneſs of the extent propoſed during the then Adminiſtration. Where that is granted to armed which would be refuſed to unarmed men, compulſion is evident.

Can we wonder then, if, when ſome of the moſt learned and patriotic Senators held openly that reſiſtance againſt tyranny and oppreſſion was a principle known to the Conſtitution, when three millions of our ſubjects in America had carried that principle into effect, and three millions more in Ireland had followed their example,

ample, though without meeting with a check, and when in England disaffection prevailed very generally, can we, I say, wonder that similar causes will produce similar effects; that men who fancy themselves equally aggrieved will be equally clamorous for redress, equally tenacious of their rights, equally obstinate in keeping up the language of resistance? And after a retrospect, however short, of such transactions as distinguished this period, where is the necessity of seeking for the cause of disaffection in France? Why, after the conscious pride, that the Statesmen and Writers of this nation have laid the foundation of rational liberty, should we seek for the plainest and most simple principles of government from a people, the wisest of whom are but copyists, and would have yet been wiser, had they contented themselves to copy that which had obtained the sanction of time and experience?

I have mentioned Reforms, things that are now the object of alarm, and to which we have given the epithet seditious. In 1780 public meetings were held in most of the principal counties in England, and petitions were presented to Parliament, praying for the establishment of a system of œconomy. This encouraged Mr. Burke to bring forward his plan, one part of which went to "diminish the *regal influence*, that influence which took away all vigour from our arms, wisdom from our councils, and every shadow of authority and credit from the most venerable part of the Constitution." The motion was lost; but the stigma, already too often attempted upon the *regal* influence, was not lost. The Earl of Shelburne, about the same time, advanced a motion, to annihilate "that undue influence operating upon both Houses of Parliament, which, if not eradicated, would prove the destruction of this country." The Marquis of Rockingham asserted, that a system had been formed at the accession of his present Majesty to govern this country under the forms of law, but in reality through the immediate influence of the Crown. This was the origin of all our national misfortunes; the measures of the present reign wore every internal and external evidence of that dangerous and alarming origin; and when combined, they presented such a system of corruption, venality, and despotism, as had never perhaps been known under any form of free and limited Government. Five and thirty Lords set their hands to a Protest conveying such sentiments; and a few days after, a motion was gravely debated, "That the Influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished." The Speaker of the House supported it, and it was carried by a majority of eighteen. This motion was confessedly extracted from the various popular Petitions presented to

 the

the Houſe. The Miniſter, however, contrived for the preſent to get rid of all the conſequences of it, and his ſucceſſors have done the ſame.

The riots which took place in London this year are deſerving of our conſideration. They have been mentioned as an example which a wiſe Government ſhould ever have before its eyes. It is not, however, too much to ſay, that under a wiſe Government they never could have happened. The whole frame muſt be palſied, when a very few of the loweſt of the mob, without any arms but what were uſeful in pulling down houſes, ſhould for many days burn and pillage ſuch cities as London and Weſtminſter. But it is needleſs to revive the general invectives againſt the then Adminiſtration. Their negligence and ſupineneſs have been confeſſed, and never, as far as I know, contradicted by any apology. I am willing to believe that no ſuch riots will ever again be permitted; the appearance of them forms a neceſſity, an urgency of time and circumſtances, which will juſtify any interpoſition, ſhould that of the civil power be found inadequate. I did not, therefore, ſee much to blame in ordering the military to be in readineſs on ſome late occaſions: but though in readineſs, it might be prudent that they be kept out of ſight. Where the law is known, its terrors will in moſt caſes be ſufficient, without the preſence of the executioner. When a mob is aſſembled, be the pretence what it may, there is danger. The day *may* paſs quietly; but they, who from the beſt motives call together promiſcuous aſſemblies of the people, have not the power to go beyond a certain length in controuling their evil diſpoſitions. When I uſe the word *mob*, I do not mean to apply it to perſons that are low in point of wealth and rank, for among ſuch we may often find a good, a wiſe, a humane, and a peaceable diſpoſition; but I mean the loweſt in underſtanding, who are at once ignorant, diſſolute, and brutal. Such were the mob who carried their devaſtations over the whole of the metropolis. What was their origin?

An aſſembly was called by Lord George Gordon, of Petitioners to Parliament. He declared he would not preſent their Petition unleſs accompanied by twenty thouſand men. Theſe twenty thouſand accordingly aſſembled, and twenty thouſand more aſſembled to ſee them. With ſuch a force he went to the Houſe of Commons. A few days afterward the mob aroſe, and began to anticipate the object of the Petition, by deſtroying the Houſes of Roman Catholics. Conſiderable pains were taken to prove that none of the Proteſtant Aſſociation (the Petitioners) were concerned in the riots. It is certain that no actual proof was brought of any member

of

of that Aſſociation being concerned; but there the matter ends. On the other hand, was it not equally certain, that Lord George's blue-cockaded Petitioners inſulted many of the Members of Parliament on the day they preſented their Petition, and in a great meaſure overawed the Houſe? Was this peaceable and conſtitutional? And did not their Petition originate in a ſpirit of bigotry and ſuperſtition, from which thoſe very conſequences are always to be apprehended, which actually followed, on this occaſion, in London, and, ſome years after, at Birmingham? Large bodies of men, unknown, or but little known to each other, aſſembling together, is a matter of ſerious conſideration. The Legiſlature ought to pay particular attention to it, and the chief object ought to be, to aſcertain the real purpoſes of the meeting, and to redreſs the grievance, if real. If it be imaginary, there is little cauſe for alarm. The world is not yet in a ſtate of ſuch happy inactivity, as to incur the pain of imaginary evils. The body politic is ſeldom hypochondriac.

The Miniſters who had for ſo many years conducted the affairs of the nation in ignorance and in defiance of its true intereſts, were at length diſmiſſed. After loſing the confidence of the nation, they loſt that of Parliament. "Such a bunch of imbecility," ſaid Dr. Johnſon, "never diſgraced a country. If they ſent a Meſſenger into the City to take up a Printer, the Meſſenger was taken up inſtead of the Printer, and committed by the ſitting Alderman. If they ſent one army to the relief of another, the firſt army was defeated and taken before the ſecond arrived."

A new Adminiſtration was formed, which poſſeſſed the confidence of the people. Some meaſures of reform were introduced with ſucceſs; but the ſuppoſed radical cure of all political evils, a Reform of the Repreſentation of the People in Parliament, although recommended by men of the higheſt abilities and moſt popular talents, and backed by the reſolutions of moſt numerous provincial meetings, was rejected; and the death of the Marquis of Rockingham diſappointed what hopes might be entertained from the farther patriotic exertions of this Adminiſtration. Party intereſts claſhed: a feeble Adminiſtration was formed, which laſted, however, long enough to conclude a peace, when it gave way to an Adminiſtration formed of a coalition between ſome of the Rockingham party and ſome of the Tory party; between Mr. Fox and Lord North. Such a coalition required ſome apology. It appeared monſtrous and unprincipled, and it did receive all the apology which ingenuity could furniſh; but the public could not enter into the feelings of the coaleſced party. To the people, to many wiſe and many good men, it ſtill was monſtrous and unnatural.

tural. It may be granted that reaſons may be ſometimes politically good, which are not morally ſo, and mere prudence may appear a virtue. But there were circumſtances which rendered this junction peculiarly abhorrent. The oppoſition to Lord North by thoſe who now joined him, was not merely an oppoſition to his meaſures; it was perſonal, and it appeared to be virulent, and malevolent. This was wrong; wrong in itſelf, wrong in its conſequences; it was the effect of intemperate violence, the heat of argument, and the chagrin of diſappointment. It might now be repented of, but it could not be forgotten. From this unhappy moment, we may date that want of confidence in public men of all parties, which is often expreſſed in terms not very guarded, in the public meetings and reſolutions of thoſe who aſſemble to conſider of grievances or to ſuggeſt remedies. The Whig party have lately, indeed, atoned in ſome meaſure, and they are become popular with the diſcontented part of the nation; and, from the defections from their own party, it is thought that their politics are now built on the firm and broad ground of conſtitutional rights and privileges, throwing aſide all party conſiderations.

Unpopular as the Coalition Adminiſtration ſoon became, it was not difficult to complete their ruin. They introduced a plan for the better government of India, which was repreſented as a ſcheme to aggrandize themſelves, at the expence of the dignity of the Crown, and the liberties of the people. Or right, or wrong, this opinion prevailed. The King diſſolved the Parliament, in a time of general peril and confuſion, and the people confirmed his choice, by rejecting many of the moſt diſtinguiſhed Members of the Coalition party, and ſending a decided majority in favour of Mr. Pitt, who has remained in power ever ſince.

At this period his Majeſty had the happineſs to regain the favour of the people, or rather to enjoy it in a higher degree than ever. He was at this time the moſt popular man in the kingdom: the City of London renewed its connection with the Court, and improved every year in political intimacy with the new Adminiſtration. But the Minority were not feeble, nor few; they numbered ſome of the moſt ancient and opulent families in the kingdom, and almoſt all the ableſt orators. In a ſhort time they acquired a conſiderable degree of conſequence with the people. The Commutation and Shop Tax, the extenſion of the Exciſe, and other unpopular meaſures, gave occaſion for a revival of thoſe principles in which the people were wont to join. The great queſtion of Parliamentary Reform was again brought forward, but without ſucceſs.

Of his Majesty's popularity many distinguished proofs were given. The attempt upon his person by a poor lunatic was followed by congratulatory Addresses from all parts of the kingdom. But the great burst of loyalty was heard on his recovery from a dangerous illness. The debates on the Regency Bill occasioned a general expression of the public mind, and it was decisively in favour of the Administration. This expression was conveyed by the same means as are found in this volume, by public meetings of all ranks of men, whether in a corporate or individual relation.

During many years, there were few Political Societies. That of the Bill of Rights, erected in the turbulent days of Mr. Wilkes, had ceased. The Revolution and Constitutional Societies, and the Whig Club, were the only ones of great note. The former scarcely deserves the name of a Society. For a great many years it had been usual for some gentlemen to celebrate the anniversary of the Revolution of 1688, on the 4th of November; Stewards were appointed for the annual feast, and tickets sold to any person whatever, who might chuse to purchase them. The principal toasts were, the memory of King William, the King and Royal Family, the Trial by Jury, Liberty of the Press, and others, which in former days were thought *innocent*. Many persons of high rank attended this meeting. During the American war there was occasional warmth displayed, but the Society did not attract much attention before the Centenary Anniversary, in 1788, when a similar commemoration was held in every city and town in the kingdom. Men of all parties joined in celebrating an event to which they attributed the happiness and prosperity of a whole century. The Revolution Society was on this occasion honoured with the company of one of his Majesty's principal Secretaries of State, and other persons high in office and in confidence at Court.

The Constitutional Society was of a different kind. I know not its origin, but its principle was to regard measures and not men, to publish Resolutions in favour of any measure proposed that seemed to be for the support of the Constitution, and the promotion of general happiness. They occasionally published a few extracts from political writings, but their circulation of them was, I am told, never very extensive. They held regular meetings, had a sort of laws, and were so far constituted as to deserve the name of Society or Club. They also at one time could rank many distinguished Noblemen and Members of Parliament among their number. The only other Society was the Whig Club, instituted in 1784, chiefly to support the cause of the Whigs, but not extending to an interference in the political transactions of the day. It was

not

not until the commencement of the French Revolution that these Societies became liable to suspicion.

When the origin and early progress of that Revolution was first known in Great Britain, it is in the memory of every one, that it gave satisfaction rather than occasioned alarm. The nation had often severely smarted and was yet sore from the consequences of the intriguing and perfidious conduct of the French Court. It was gratifying to see our old and *natural* enemy humbled, and it was pleasing to reflect that a numerous and ingenious people were about to share the blessings of liberty. Such, I have reason to think, were the general sentiments of the nation. The papers most devoted to the Ministry, even spoke with exultation of the progress of the first Assembly, and foresaw a more happy alliance between the two nations than had ever been established by treaties of peace, which were seldom more than the lucid intervals of mad ambition. —The places of public amusement prepared entertainments illustrative of what had happened in France. *Ca Ira* was played before their Majesties and all ranks of people. Some, indeed, pretended to foresee that France, enjoying freedom, would be a dangerous commercial rival. But the impression made by this, if strong, was transient.

This wise neutrality was soon unhappily broken. The moderate and decent expressions of public opinion were to be changed for that violent and illiberal language, which divides a nation against itself. Public opinion, where it extends to questions of political importance, is not indeed a fixed principle, the result of a train of reasoning. It is not a truth capable of demonstration, or a self-evident proposition, the opposite of which would be absurd. The opinion of the bulk of mankind, even at the close of this enlightened century, as it is called, is at *his* service who knows that the majority are weak, and incapable of vindicating their natural sentiments. A man, therefore, who can write a book, the arguments of which are plausible and specious, and the stile elegant and fascinating, and who has a name great, popular, and commanding, has little to fear from the stubbornness of preconceived opinion. Such a man was Edmund Burke. He asserted that he spoke the prevalent sentiments of the nation. It was a prophecy disguised as a fact, and it was fulfilled in a very short time. He led the opinions of the public; he told them what to think and how to speak, and they obeyed. The French Revolution was no longer a matter which concerned another, and not ourselves. It was brought home to our "business and bosoms." It became an object of terror.

Although

Although Mr. Burke was succesful in disturbing the respectful neutrality the nation had preserved, and in animating their zeal, there were many who had viewed the French Revolution in a very different light. He saw nothing in it that was good; they saw nothing in it that was bad. Among this party, we find the most distinguished political writers of the age; who carried on a controversy with such ardour and keenness, that it became impossible for thinking men to remain neutral. Moderation disappeared; the English Revolution began to be forgotten; Mr. Burke contended that it has not done, what it was the fashion to assert it had done. Mr. Paine thought it had done nothing at all for the people. The question was no longer about Reforms in particular parts of Government. Nothing short of a Revolution seemed to please one party, and nothing short of absolute Monarchy another. It was every where KINGS *versus* PEOPLE. The Revolution and Constitutional Societies now talked in a very high tone. They commended the writings of Mr. Paine, and circulated them in a cheap form. The Corresponding Society was instituted to obtain Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage; and to the language of these societies, in their public meetings and addresses, we are to attribute the *alarm* which so generally prevailed in the year 1792.

How far those societies, and the opponents in general of Mr. Burke, acted wisely, what influence they had over the public mind, what were their numbers and their resources, and what good or evil they have done, are questions which it is not necessary to enter upon in this place. The proceedings of Parliament and the trials for High Treason disclosed all that could be known upon these subjects. That the high and imperious language of these societies, their affected use of French phrases, and their assuming an importance which the nation had not conferred upon them, that all this was wrong cannot well be doubted; but it was at the same time foolish, and its folly would have appeared very soon, had it been treated with silent contempt; but violence begets violence, and what serves for attack often serves for defence.

Precipitation was the fatal error of both parties. We either disapproved of the French proceedings with which we had nothing to do, no immediate necessity impelling us to interfere, or we applauded them as objects of imitation before their consequences were known. Either the early principles of the French Constitution, the Rights of Man, led naturally to the miseries that have since happened, or they did not. If they did not, they were not at least objects of alarm; if they did, we might have waited for such effects as would have rendered them too horrid for imitation. All men

agreed

agreed that the Revolution was neceſſary; the propriety of the Conſtitution was a mattet that might have been left to themſelves. Yet unfortunately theſe two diſtinct objects were confounded, and they who blamed the Conſtitution blamed alſo the Revolution as the primary cauſe of all which followed. This perverſion of the faculty of reaſoning is not uncommon, particularly when falſe doctrines are engrafted upon true principles, as in the caſe of the Jeſuits two centuries ago, who maintained that King-Killing was lawful, becauſe " all civil power is ultimately derived from the People."

Thoſe who contend, that it would have been better for Great Britain to have maintained a perfect, honourable, and unequivocal neutrality, while France was involved, or likely to be involved, in war with her more immediate neighbours, had acted with conſiſtency, had they preſerved the neutrality of the pen. But the cauſe of France was fought in England firſt. Mr. Burke gave the challenge, and a hoſt of able and ingenious champions came forward, not to tell him that he had choſen an improper time, and fallen upon improper methods to vindicate the Government of his country, but to repreſent the new order of things in France as that upon which every eye ſhould be fixed, and that from which all moral and political leſſons were to be derived. Mr. Burke took one extreme, and they the other. " It is much to be lamented," ſays a learned author, " that moſt of the writers upon theſe political ſubjects have ſet out, and continued through their whole career, upon the treacherous *extremities* of their reſpective doctrines. Under this exceſſive tenſion, the different partizans view their antagoniſts in the loweſt degree of depravity, and repreſent them in the groſſeſt terms of degradation." This controverſy, however, would have probably died away, or been terminated in the fair defeat of one of the parties, had the weapons of reaſon and argument only been employed. But ſome of the ſocieties began to publiſh papers and reſolutions reflecting upon Government in the moſt intemperate language, and to circulate works, the tendency of which, if effectual, could only be to bring Monarchy into diſcredit. The more violent theſe publications were, the more eagerly were they circulated, and no notice having been taken of them by the public Proſecutor, the miſchief, of whatever magnitude, was done long before the law interfered. If to puniſh was a duty, the danger of delay appeared evident in two reſpects: firſt, the ſedition had been ſufficiently circulated to anſwer much of the purpoſes of its authors; and ſecondly, the perſons puniſhed, in conſequence of proſecutions, were not the guilty party: they were moſtly men who ſold the books in their

their ſhops as articles of general trade. Whatever portion of diſcontent, therefore, had been created in the minds of ſome men, by the operation of ſuch doctrines, was increaſed in thoſe of others by the manner in which they were ſuppreſſed.

When by the conflict of opinions, which diſturbed the peace of the community, by the bold reſolutions and addreſſes of the ſocieties, and by their correſpondence with France, the Miniſtry thought it their duty to interpoſe between the Conſtitution and its opponents; they founded the opinions of the public at large, and all bodies of men united in reſolutions and addreſſes expreſſive of their veneration for the Conſtitution under which they had the happineſs to live. So general a teſt of loyalty, perhaps, was never ſo eagerly taken. All this was fair, had what appeared upon the ſurface been of the ſame ſtuff with what lay deep. If Adminiſtration had been contented with this, the inſignificance of the Republican Party would have been ſo obvious as to create no alarm. But ſingular as it may ſeem, the cry of danger became loudeſt when actual danger had diſappeared. The neceſſity and juſtice of a war with France was firſt inſinuated and then openly avowed. Epithets were invented for every man who thought that war might be avoided, that it was unjuſt in its principle and would be unſucceſsful in its iſſue, and that there was that wanting, without which no war can be juſt, namely, a plain, unequivocal, and ſpecific object. All who ventured to expreſs ſuch opinions were *Republicans*, *Levellers*, or *Jacobins*. Of all libels, nicknames are the moſt atrocious. They exaſperate the paſſions, they ſteel the hearts of men againſt one another; they ſupport ignorance and bigotry; they have in all ages been the incitement to injuſtice, rapine, and murder.

Added to the general expreſſion of loyalty, which I have juſt mentioned, there were other circumſtances that tended to leſſen the number of the zealous admirers of the French. The maſſacres of Auguſt and September, particularly the latter, gave a flat denial to the many aſſertions we had made of the happineſs of the people of France under their new form. What has happened ſince might be ſuppoſed to tend to the ſame purpoſe, ſince the original ſyſtem propoſed in France is no longer followed, and ſince they have eſtabliſhed a Conſtitution, which being more reaſonable in the opinion of our Adminiſtration, muſt be leſs ſo in the opinion of the Republicans. Yet the repeal of the Habeas Corpus Act, the trials for High Treaſon, and the two Bills, whoſe hiſtory fills this volume, are a proof that in the opinion of his Majeſty's Miniſters, there ſtill exiſts a party whoſe object is the ſubverſion of our Conſtitution. The exiſtence of ſuch a party, their numbers, their ſtrength,

the opinions of Statesmen, and the sentiments of the country at large concerning them, are subjects so amply argued and detailed in the following sheets, that it is wholly unnecessary for me to take any farther notice of them, than as they are connected with what has been attempted in these Remarks; namely, to prove that the most obnoxious doctrines which have been *publicly professed* by the Societies deemed seditious, are not the growth of the principles of the French Constitution, are not new in this country, but have been repeatedly asserted in Parliament, argued in publications which it never was deemed necessary to prosecute, and maintained with much apparent zeal by men who now rank high in the confidence of Parliament and the nation. That this is no assertion made upon slight grounds, will appear evident to every one who studies the history of the present reign, a reign in all respects so important to this nation and to Europe in general, that a politician who has not studied it must be miserably defective in a knowledge of the true interests of the country. What I have given is a mere sketch, a slight outline, sufficient, it is hoped, to recommend the subject, but by no means intended to preclude conclusions of a different nature. Nor have I thought it necessary to enter into the subject as a party. The questions in dispute, I have left as I found them. It was sufficient for my purpose to state in point of fact, that from the year 1763, there has been a contest carried on between the power of the Crown and the rights of the people, with very little intermission, that such and such complaints were made, and remedies proposed, which were not obtained; that a few concessions, indeed, have been made, but not gracefully, not without appearances of constraint and alarm; that the principles of the Legislature adopted in 1765, with regard to America, involved the country in a dispute with that people, not about a trifling tax, but whether the Americans had a right to resist a supposed act of oppression; that their right was denied, and they were deemed traitors and rebels; but that, after expending an hundred millions of money, and wasting an hundred thousand livres, an Ambassador from these rebels, this banditti, this beggarly crew, was received at St. James's; that in the course of the war, every principle of Government underwent an examination, and was fully discussed, both in and out of Parliament, and that such discussion was not questioned as a matter of right—that the tenor of such discussion yet remains: the principles established by them, that is by the success of America, yet remain. They went to France with the victorious army; they had there a rapid growth, and the French Court, who, by assisting the

the Americans, thought to humble the pride of Great Britain, blindly wrought its own deſtruction. Samſon deſtroyed himſelf when he deſtroyed his enemies. Man thinks himſelf wiſe, when he projects grand ſchemes of ambition and revenge, but in the ſcience of cauſes he has no wiſdom. The French Revolution was attributed to the calling of the States-General. "But," ſays Lord Bolingbroke, "however cloſely affairs are linked together in the progreſſion of governments, and how much ſoever events that follow are dependent on thoſe that precede, the whole connection diminiſhes to ſight as the chain lengthens, till at laſt it ſeems to be broken"—*ſeems* ſo indeed to the illiberal and the ſhort-ſighted; but the chain is not broken. Nothing is more neceſſary than to attend to remote cauſes, and prediſpoſing events; and nothing is more common than the ſurpriſe with which we are ſtruck when we compare the greatneſs of an event with the littleneſs of its cauſe. When a man tells me that the exiſtent diſcontents of the kingdom aroſe from ſomething which happened thirty or forty years ago, I am diſpoſed to ſmile. He ſhews me the chain of events, and I am ſilent.

In ſelecting the few facts which appeared neceſſary to my purpoſe, I may be thought to have leaned to the unfavourable ſide, but ſuch was not my intention. That the ſucceſſive Adminiſtrations of this kingdom have been often reviled unjuſtly, and miſrepreſented groſsly, I am diſpoſed to admit, and that his Majeſty's perſonal virtues have been confounded with the actions of his Miniſters, is equally certain. But ſuch will ever be the effect of party-ſpirit. Men of this ſpirit can ſee nothing good in their opponents, and hence the vices of falſehood, miſrepreſentation, and deluſion. "It is no wonder," ſays Hume, "that faction is ſo productive of vices of all kinds: for, beſides that it inflames all the paſſions, it tends much to remove thoſe great reſtraints, honour, and ſhame; when men find, that no iniquity can loſe them the applauſe of their own party, and no innocence ſcreen them againſt the calumnies of the oppoſite;" and this is not an accuſation which applies to one party only.

But the effect of calumny, after all, is ſhort-lived, and it might become a great mind to deſpiſe it. Yet there are aſſertions, generally confounded with calumnies, which are more worthy of the attention of public men. Theſe are what have *ſome* foundation in truth, but are exaggerated in the relation. To refute theſe by admitting enquiry, would be equally juſt and prudent; yet when we find every motion for enquiry negatived as a factious attempt, and

aſſertions of the moſt ſerious nature diſmiſſed without refutation, can we wonder if they are believed? Can we wonder if a ſucceſſion of ſuch charges ingeniouſly made, and only bluntly denied, ſhould accumulate in the minds of men, ſhould form that aggregate of diſcontent which is termed ſedition or diſaffection? If we do wonder at this, we betray our ignorance of the mind of man.

Public meaſures, in order to be popular, muſt not only be recommended by the grace of eloquence but by the weight of argument, and as the preſs is the common engine of both parties in recommending their meaſures, let it be employed with equal freedom. It is not, indeed, an engine which the Legiſlature recognizes as neceſſary to its operations, but a Miniſter who does not deſpiſe the opinion of the people, muſt reſort to it. Such has been the practice of Miniſters, and ſuch is the practice yet; but whether the perſons employed in this ſervice be the beſt fitted to perform it, or whether the ſervice itſelf is clogged with natural imperfections, it is certain that the uſe of the Preſs has not been attended with the hoped-for conſequences to Adminiſtration.

The preſent ſtate of parties ſeems to be this:—The moſt numerous and powerful are the friends of the preſent Adminiſtration—the next, thoſe of the Whigs—and the third, the Republican party. The two laſt agree in an abhorrence of the war—of ſyſtems of corruption and profuſion, and in a diſlike of the meaſures of the preſent Adminiſtration. But there the connection ends. The Whigs are attached to the conſtitutional principles which ſeated the preſent family on the Throne. Of the Republican party, I know not how to ſpeak. They are not publicly embodied, nor have they given us their plan. Writings of a Republican tendency have been publiſhed by individuals, but it does not appear that there is any ſociety for the purpoſe of promoting them. If, however, we are to reckon the Correſponding Society among this party, their numbers may be aſcertained without much difficulty. They boaſted (p. 130) that they were 400,000, and their Petition was ſigned by leſs than 14,000. They tell us they are increaſing in numbers, and they certainly continue their meetings, notwithſtanding the new Bills. But as there is no proof that they are Republicans, we can only conſider them as a ſociety whoſe object is Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments, a whim of the Duke of Richmond, but never practiſed in any age or nation, and never propoſed even in France or America. A ſcheme which I have no queſtion would give way to liberal diſcuſſion, but we think it more proper, becauſe it is eaſieſt, to brand it with the epithet of *traitorous* or *ſeditious*.

Whether

Whether the ſteps that have been taken to repreſs the violence of this ſociety, or to annihilate it altogether, are the moſt wiſe that could have been adopted, is fully diſcuſſed in the ſubſequent ſheets. But ſetting aſide the conſideration of this ſociety, it is pretty obvious that there is a very conſiderable degree of diſcontent prevalent in the kingdom, and beſides referring to cauſes which have been already mentioned, and are ſufficiently notorious, I cannot help thinking that the moſt alarming ſymptom of this diſcontent is a WANT OF CONFIDENCE IN PUBLIC MEN. Of late, in particular, inſtances of political apoſtacy have been ſo frequent, as to fill the minds of ſerious and thinking men with a ſentiment approaching to deſpair of public men and public meaſures. It is true that ſuch perſons may be deceived, and that what they call apoſtacy, may be only that change of ſentiment which muſt often occur in the free exerciſe of reaſon. It is alſo true, that ſuch is the nature of *party*, that a man who becomes a member of one muſt, in all caſes, vote with his colleagues; and, when he does otherwiſe, they brand him with the name of apoſtate. But on the other hand, *interdum populus recte vidit.* There is a wide difference betwixt a man changing his opinion from the force of free enquiry, or the impulſe of conviction, and his ſtepping forward at one moment to contradict all the opinions of a former, perhaps a long life, receiving honours and rewards, and reviling thoſe he formerly acted with. When a man changes his opinion, the public have no right to doubt that it is upon conviction; but when that change is directly followed by a lucrative appointment, they have a right to trace the effect to a different cauſe; they have a right to think that his conſcience has been weakened by a bribe, and that his principles are reduced to pounds, ſhillings and pence. "Such a man may be convinced, but he has not come honeſtly by his conviction."

Some have recommended an attention to meaſures and not to men. This would certainly be deſirable, but there is ſomething in our natures which renders it for the moſt part impracticable. We love the perſon as well as the principles of a man of public ſpirit, and patriotic boldneſs. We cannot ſeparate the deed from the doer. We look not into his private life and concerns. We conſider only what he has done for the nation, and for poſterity. We venerate the courage he has diſplayed in ſtemming the current of fraud, corruption or oppreſſion. We hail him as the benefactor of the people, and cannot diveſt ourſelves of ſuch an eſteem for his perſon as will prompt us to a ſtrong attachment, a mixture of gratitude and affection. This may not be right; philoſophers may deſpiſe it; but it is natural. When therefore the man

upon

upon whom we have relied with an implicit confidence, to whom we look with a fond affection, betrays the truſt we have repoſed in him, renounces his former principles, explains away his former declarations, and adopts a new method of acting from no other viſible motive than ambition or ſelf-intereſt, we feel the diſappointment in all its bitterneſs; our pride is wounded; the bands of friendſhip are not diſſolved, but rudely torn aſunder; our affections receive a ſhock from which it is not eaſy to recover; and our confidence in public profeſſions is weakened. Candour, patriotiſm, public ſpirit appear to be mere pretences, the means to an unlawful end, and we think (to uſe the words of a memorable Proteſt) that the means to an unlawful end are unlawful means.

What is the conſequence in private life of hypocriſy, of men putting on falſe appearances and deceiving their neareſt connections, but that want of confidence between man and man which has planted the bitter root of hoſtility in every part of ſocial life? Cold prudence and reſerve have ſucceeded to ingenuous, and honeſt truſt. We do not believe a man honeſt until we find him otherwiſe, but we believe him diſhoneſt becauſe others have been ſo. Such are the fruits of fraudulent actions in common life. With reſpect to public characters, the danger is not leſs. When the people have completely loſt all confidence in public men, they may for a time remain quiet, their murmurs may not be loud, nor their diſcontent break out in actions, but their energies as men, citizens, and patriots are gone. They view paſſing events with a careleſs indifference. Alike unattached to men in or out of place, they conſider all Government as fraud and colluſion. They will place all its advantages to their own account; all its reſtraints to the tyranny of their Governors. Remote from thoſe temptations which have ſhaken the conſtancy of their public favourites, they cannot enter into their feelings. The metaphyſical refinements of an apoſtate's apology are too abſtruſe for them. They have derived a few plain principles from their religion and their education. According to theſe they form their own, and they examine the characters of other men. Sir, I believe, and I am proud to believe it, that there is a maſs of goodneſs and virtue in this country which cannot be diſſipated by corruption, and which, when corruption has done its worſt, will at laſt ſave the nation from the miſeries which a people leſs virtuous have ſuffered from the diſſolution of Government.

Various other cauſes might be aſſigned for the diſcontent that confeſſedly prevails, in a greater or leſſer degree, in every part of the kingdom. That ſome of theſe cauſes may be imaginary affords

no

no ground for denying that others are real. Whatever may have created discontent previous to the commencement of this war, it would not be easily possible to deny that it has increased greatly since. No war, in so short a period, has added more to the burthens of the people, no war has been more unsuccessful, none has been attended with so vast a rise in the price of all the necessaries of life. It is now ascertained beyond all doubt that the labourers of this country cannot maintain themselves, and consequently that so vast and useful a body of men must be supported, if supported at all, by charity. All these evils may not have been occasioned by this war, but it is certain that they are the natural consequence, growing by little and little, from the wars in which we have been engaged since the commencement of the present century.

Whatever opinion may be formed of the causes of the present discontents, the manner in which they have been treated is neither humane nor prudent. The very word discontent is made to imply something vicious and turbulent; to complain is to be factious: to represent complaints, and suggest remedies, however warmly, or however respectfully, is held out as presumptuous and seditious. In a state of suffering, men cannot be expected to chuse their expressions with a courtly precision, but the complaint itself may be well founded, however unguardedly expressed. Yet when we find that the soundest principles are turned into ridicule, that when corruption is demonstrably proved, men will assert that corruption is necessary, and that when war, for any other purposes than those of self-defence, is proved by all experience and all history to be destructive of happiness, and hostile to the laws of God, others shall tell us this is the language of hypocrites, mere cant which the seditious use to serve their own ends. I say, Sir, when such is the nature of the dispute between parties, it is not difficult to foresee what the issue must one day be.

I am not, however, so far afraid of the imputation of hypocrisy, as not to affirm that war, unless for the clearest purpose of self-defence, is a measure which a wise head and a good heart would never have recourse to. The nation which delights in war, has no pretensions to the name of Christian. The whole system of war is an attack upon christianity, a practical, deliberate, cool avowal of contempt for its precepts. War brutalizes mankind, and destroys the proud distinction between savage and refined life. Wherein do the wars of savages differ from those of other nations, except perhaps in the solitary article of not selling or eating prisoners, and instead of these butchering them in cool blood, or allowing them

to

to die of their wounds? The celebrated Dr. Samuel Johnſon, will not be ſuſpected of diſaffection or ſedition. Yet he has left behind him a proteſt againſt war which ought to be deeply engraven on the hearts of all Stateſmen. One paſſage only my room will permit me to extract. "Of the thouſands and ten thouſands that periſhed in our late conteſts with France and Spain, a very ſmall part ever felt the ſtroke of an enemy, the reſt languiſhed in tents and ſhips, amidſt damps and putrefaction; pale, torpid, ſpiritleſs, and helpleſs; gaſping and groaning, unpitied among men, made obdurate by long continuance of hopeleſs miſery; and were at laſt whelmed in pits, or heaved into the ocean, without notice and without remembrance." So much for the wars of civilized nations. Of the preſent war, without conſidering the cauſe or object, or the parties concerned, I ſhall only ſay, that it has been diſtinguiſhed beyond all others for the moſt unmeaning, ſtupid, brutal and ſavage prodigality of human life.

But this may be cant. Let us then talk more rationally. Let us try what cool calculation will do. What have we gained by our wars? Did ever any war defray its own expences? We all know the loſs, but where is the profit? In concluding a peace, where is that popular deſideratum, indemnity? Indemnity may be the cry of the day to reconcile the people to another and another campaign; but it is miſerable deluſion. Negociators well know that indemnity is impracticable. The conquering party will not grant it, and the conquered cannot. What then do we gain? "A ſplendid game, a proclamation, an army, a battle and a triumph." "Our recompenſe, ſays the ſame author, is to contemplate the ſudden glories of Paymaſters and Agents, Contractors and Commiſſaries, whoſe equipages ſhine like meteors, and whoſe palaces riſe like exhalations. Theſe are the men who, without virtue, labour or hazard, are growing rich as their country is impoveriſhed; they rejoice, when obſtinacy or ambition adds another year to ſlaughter and devaſtation; and laugh from their deſks at bravery and ſcience, while they are adding figure to figure, and cypher to cypher, hoping for a new contract from a new armament, and computing the profits of a ſiege or tempeſt."

Sir, when I have occaſionally inveſtigated the ſeveral cauſes which are advanced in juſtification of the bloody buſineſs of war, I have been tempted to conſider war in no more reſpectable light than I conſider duelling, "Duelling," ſays Archdeacon Paley, "as a *puniſhment* is abſurd; becauſe it is an equal chance whether the puniſhment fall upon the offender, or the perſon offended. Nor

is

is it much better as a *reparation*, it being difficult to explain what the satisfaction consists in, or how it tends to undo the injury, or to afford a compensation for the damage already sustained." Is this case far different from that of war? The original object in dispute, whether understood or not, remains where it was. Power, indeed, makes a kind of decision, and gives a breathing time, but no advocate for power will say that it is a substitute for reason and justice. It is remarkable, too, that there is this connection betwixt duelling and war, that military men are the only men to whom we allow the privilege of deciding their private disputes by the sword. And I am sorry I have seen, or think I have seen lately, a disposition to incorporate the laws of honour with those of the land.

The majority of the discontented seem to be composed of the lower classes of the people. If they have, therefore, whereof to complain, it would be wise to examine into the nature of the complaint, and not to reject it rudely without any enquiry, merely because persons of this description may, from want of understanding, and passions little under the controul of reason, be led to commit enormities of the most serious nature. Wherever discontent becomes general in a nation, there must be something wrong in the administration of public affairs, I will not say something misconceived or misrepresented, for that which is false cannot long prevail against that which is true, but something radically and substantially wrong. It will be no disgrace for Ministers to re-trace their own errors, and still easier those of their predecessors; to listen with patience, to argue with coolness, and to redress with readiness. The most popular Princes are those who are most forward to receive the Petitions of their subjects; and it has at least one happy effect to themselves; that it lessens the number of complaints, and leaves them to the more quiet enjoyment of their exalted rank. If abuses are confessed by all parties to exist, why is it that a *time* cannot be found to remove them?

It is with regret I observe that confusion has crept into the system of public opinions. Moderate men know not where to fix; violence is opposed to violence, and the verge is to absolute power, or resistance to all power. The Constitution formerly recognized in statutes, customs, and common law, in the mutual relations of allegiance and protection, in a limited Monarchy which naturally implies a limited obedience, becomes now personified in a party of men of power. It would seem as if they wished to revive the Imperial Constitution of Arcadius and Honorius, which determined that any attempts or designs against the Ministers of the Prince

ſhall be treaſon. To object to their will is to be diſloyal; to vote, ſpeak, or write againſt their meaſures is unconſtitutional; and to meet for the purpoſe of promoting a Reform of Parliament, is firſt factious, then ſeditious, then treaſonable; firſt puniſhed with fine, impriſonment, and baniſhment, and then threatened with death. I do not ſay that all theſe are the poſitive acts of Miniſters, but they are the declared ſentiments of their ſupporters. And, Sir, when no diſtinction is made between that regular and conſtitutional oppoſition to Miniſterial meaſures which, in all ages, has afforded protection to our liberties, and the more outrageous acts of individuals, or the unreaſonable complaints and proceedings of obſcure ſocieties, are we to wonder if a force become embodied againſt Government which carries a formidable appearance?

Nothing is more neceſſary than that our notions of Government and of the Conſtitution be certain and permanent. Confuſion only can ariſe from a fluctuation of opinions; from there being no common ground on which the diſputants can meet. If that which is right to-day may be wrong tomorrow, if that which is a duty to-day may to-morrow be a crime, if the ſame act ſhall lead one man to honour and another to a dungeon, ſuch a ſyſtem will not be thought worth preſerving.

In fact, Sir, theſe doctrines may have their day, but it will be a ſhort day. Common ſenſe is ſeldom inſulted with impunity. Allegiance and loyalty is due to the King, whoever he may be; and it would be a poor compliment to him to ſhare it with his ſervants. He is one of the eſſential branches of the Conſtitution. We owe him the ſacred reſpect we owe to a Houſe of Lords, or a Houſe of Commons. His perſon is inviolable; he is, and he ought to be the moſt exalted perſon in the kingdom, far removed from every other. But his ſervants are reſponſible; they are of ourſelves, and a heavy account will they accumulate, if they place him between themſelves and an offended people. The worſt meaſures of Republicans and Democrats do not amount to an act of treaſon ſo foul and ungrateful. But this is too much to ſuppoſe. Were folly to attempt it, the attempt would be unſucceſsful. The people know how to appreciate the public character and perſonal virtues of their Sovereign.

"You are to conſider," ſays Dr. Johnſon, "that in our Conſtitution, according to its true principles, the King is the head; he is ſupreme; he is above every thing, and there is no power by which he can be tried. Therefore it is, Sir, that we hold the King can do no wrong; that whatever may happen to be wrong in Government may not be above our reach, by being aſcribed to

Majeſty.

Majesty. Redress is always to be had against oppression, by punishing the immediate agents. The King, though he should command, cannot force a Judge to condemn a man unjustly; therefore it is the Judge whom we prosecute and punish. Political institutions are formed upon the consideration of what will most frequently tend to the good of the whole, although now and then exceptions may occur. Thus it is better in general that a nation should have a supreme legislative power, although it may at times be abused. And then, Sir, there is this consideration, that if the abuse be enormous, NATURE WILL RISE UP, AND, CLAIMING HER ORIGINAL RIGHTS, OVERTURN A CORRUPT POLITICAL SYSTEM."

I have thus executed, perhaps feebly, but I hope honestly, the plan I conceived necessary in the present crisis, to recal to mind the prevalent opinions of the present reign, to trace popular discontent to a source more honourable than a desire to imitate the proceedings of France, and to show that the radical complaints of the last thirty-five years yet remain unremoved. I shall conclude in the words of the author just quoted—"The time is now come, in which every Englishman expects to be informed of the national affairs, and in which he has a right to have that expectation gratified. For whatever may be urged by Ministers, or those whom vanity or interest make the followers of Ministers, concerning the necessity of confidence in our governors, and the presumption of prying with prophane eyes into the recesses of policy, it is evident that this reverence can be claimed only by counsels yet unexecuted, and projects suspended in deliberation. But when a design has ended in miscarriage or success, when every eye and every ear is witness to general discontent or general satisfaction, it is then a proper time to disentangle confusion and illustrate obscurity, to show by what causes every event was procured, and in what effects it is likely to terminate; to lay down with distinct particularity what rumour always huddles in general exclamation, or perplexes by indigested narratives; to show whence happiness or calamity is derived, and whence it may be expected; and honestly to lay before the People what enquiry can gather of the past, and conjecture can estimate of the future."

I am, &c.

HISTORY

OF

TWO ACTS, &c.

ON Thurſday October 29, 1795, the Seſſion of Parliament was opened by a Speech from the Throne. After the ceremony was concluded, Lord Grenville was about to addreſs the Houſe of Peers, when the Bar was ordered to be cleared, and their Lordſhips went into a Committee of Privileges in conſequence of certain circumſtances which had attended his Majeſty's coming to the Houſe.

LORD GRENVILLE then informed their Lordſhips, that the matter he had to ſubmit to them previous to their proceeding to the conſideration of his Majeſty's moſt gracious Speech from the Throne, was ſuch as he had no doubt would be thought to require their immediate attention, ſince it equally concerned the perſonal ſafety of the King, and the dignity and privileges of Parliament. Being informed that his Majeſty's Speech from the Throne muſt be firſt diſpoſed of, Lord Grenville moved, that it be taken into conſideration the next day. His Lordſhip then briefly ſtated, that his Majeſty had been groſsly inſulted in his way to the Houſe, his ſtate coach damaged, and an aſſault attempted on his Royal Perſon. An outrage, ſo indecent and unparalleled, demanded that their Lordſhips ſhould take ſuch neceſſary ſteps as to their wiſdom ſhould appear moſt fit, in order to manifeſt their zeal and attachment to his

Majeſty,

Majeſty, their alarm for his danger and abhorrence for the authors of it, and their determination to adopt the moſt effectual means of bringing thoſe treaſonable perſons to condign puniſhment, who, forgetting the reſpect and reverence due to their Sovereign, had dared to violate the privilege of Parliament, to diſregard its dignity, inſult its honour, and to ſet the laws of their country at defiance.

The Earl of Westmoreland, (Maſter of the Horſe, who from his office was neceſſarily attendant on his Majeſty in his way to and from the Houſe), ſtated to the Houſe the particulars of the inſult and outrage, as far as they had fallen within his knowledge.

Lord Onslow, (a Lord of the Bed-chamber) confirmed the report made by the Earl of Weſtmoreland.

The Journals having been previouſly conſulted by his Majeſty's miniſters, in order to find a precedent, which might, by a ſort of analogy, ſuggeſt a proper mode of proceeding in a caſe ſo new and unexpected, an Addreſs was propoſed, to be followed by a conference with the other Houſe to deſire them to concur in the ſaid Addreſs.

For the Addreſs, ſee the Houſe of Commons, Monday Nov. 2.

A ſlight converſation took place on this propoſition, of which the following is ſaid to be the purport.

The Marquis of Lanſdowne, Earl Moira, the Duke of Bedford, and Lord Lauderdale, bore a part in this diſcuſſion.

The Marquis of Lansdowne animadverted with ſeverity and acrimony upon the conduct of Miniſters, whom he diſcredited and reprobated upon this occaſion. He believed, on his part, that it was no more than the counter-part of their own plot; the alarm-bell, to terrify the people into weak compliances. He thought it was a ſcheme planned and executed by miniſters themſelves, for the purpoſe of continuing their power, a power which drew the Conſtitution into their own hands, and which he would not conſider as ſafely lodged while in their poſſeſſion.

In the courſe of the converſation ſeveral points were urged, which from miſapprehenſion by one Lord or other, rendered explanation neceſſary, and it was accordingly given as occaſion required, by Lord Grenville and others.

Four witneſſes of the tranſaction that had paſſed in the courſe of the outrage, viz. Mr. Walford, of Pallmall; Mr. Stockdale, Bookſeller, Piccadilly; one of his Majeſty's footmen; and Kennedy, belonging to the Office in Bow-ſtreet, were ſeverally examined at the Bar of the Houſe.

The

The examination being clofed, a meffage was fent to the Commons, requefting an immediate conference. After fome little delay, the Commons fent meffengers to their Lordfhips, to inform them, that previous to their being able to return a fatisfactory anfwer to their Lordfhips, it was neceffary that their Lordfhips fhould ftate the fubject, on which they defired a conference. This reply occafioned fome difcuffion, which ended in its being refolved, that a fecond meffage be fent, ftating, "That the Lords defired a prefent conference with the Commons, on a fubject which involved the fafety of his Majefty's facred perfon, and the dignity and honour of Parliament."

To this Meffage the Commons agreed, and managers being appointed on their part, the conference took place in the Painted Chamber. The Earl of Mansfield (Lord Prefident) Chief Manager for the Lords, ftated the nature of the evidence they had received, and the amount of the proof.

The conference over, the Commons returned to their Houfe, and the Lords to their Chamber of Parliament, where they foon put an end to their fitting of the day by agreeing to a motion of adjournment.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The Managers being returned from the conference with the Lords,

MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS reported that they had held a conference with the Lords, in which they had been informed that their Lordfhips, in confequence of having examined the feveral perfons named, had agreed to addrefs his Majefty as ftated in the proceedings of the Lords, and that they defired the concurrence of that Houfe in the Addrefs.

THE SPEAKER faid, that the Right Honourable Gentleman having only ftated the names of the perfons examined, and not the fubftance of their evidence, which in point of ftrict order ought to be before the Houfe, before they concurred in the Addrefs, he had to fuggeft that there were two ways in which the evidence might come regularly before them. The firft was by examining the witneffes at their own bar, and the other by requefting that the Lords would lay before them minutes of the evidence as delivered at their bar. Either of thefe might be adopted as the Houfe thought fit.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, as he believed there was but one wish in the House on this important affair, he had no doubt but they would deem the latter mode the most expeditious, and therefore moved to that effect; and that Lord Mornington be sent with the Message—which being agreed to,

Lord Mornington went out, and returning almost instantly, reported, that in obedience to the orders of that House, he had been up with the Message to the House of Lords, but found that their Lordships had adjourned.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved that this Message might be taken into consideration the next day.—Ordered.

ASSAULT UPON HIS MAJESTY.

The particulars of this Assault are thus stated in the publications of the day.

In his way to the House, particularly in Parliament-street, his Majesty was assailed by hootings and hissings, which came from groupes, evidently stationed at certain distances for the purpose, who were uniform in their cry of "No war, No Pitt." Some were unruly; a few appear to have been mischievously inclined, as several stones and other articles were flung, nine of which were perceived to reach the King's carriage, in which two of the glass pannels were broke; one supposed from a marble or leaden shot from the window of a house in or near Margaret-street; which made a hole, and shivered the plate glass, but did not go through; another was a stone, thrown just as the coach turned under the gateway on its return, for which a well dressed youth, an apprentice to a jeweller, was seized and examined; and a man was committed to Bridewell; as was another for throwing a stone in the Park.

When the King had left St. James's, as the coach was passing under the garden-wall of the Palace, with no other attendants than the two footmen behind, a feint was made, and the carriage prevented from proceeding; but some Life-Guards, mounted, returning home from duty, and seeing the circumstance, marched back, and made a safe passage for his Majesty to the Queen's House.

Previous, however, to the Guards coming to his Majesty's assistance, one of the mob threw a stone through the window, which passed along close to his Majesty's face, but without doing any mischief. The Constables took a man into custody, suspected of the offence.

As the state coach returned empty through the gate by way of the Stable Yard, a dreadful accident happened in consequence of the turbulence of the mob; a Groom, who was employed as one of the leaders of the horses for the day, was beaten down, when the heavy carriage went over him, and broke one of his thighs. He was carried on a litter to his apartments in the Mews, and died some days afterwards.

The mob, as the last gratification of their spite, followed the state coach from St. James's to the Mews; and near St. Alban's-street commenced an

attack

attack upon it with ſtones and dirt, when they broke the glaſſes; and in the Mews, purſued their purpoſe ſo effectually, as almoſt entirely to demoliſh it, before the arrival of the Guards, when ſeveral perſons were apprehended.

A ſecond account ſomewhat more circumſtantial, is as follows:

Amidſt an immenſe crowd collected in St. James's Park, moſt of them from motives of true loyalty, there was mixed a deſperate mob, who evinced a moſt riotous and miſchievous diſpoſition. As his Majeſty went through the Park, it was with great difficulty that the Guards could keep the way clear for the carriage to paſs. Somewhere between the Horſe-Guards and Palace-Yard, a bullet is ſaid to have been fired from an air gun, which perforated the glaſs of the carriage, but moſt happily for the Nation, failed to accompliſh the diabolical purpoſe which it was evidently intended to effect.

The bullet is ſuppoſed to have proceeded either from an untenanted houſe, in which it was very extraordinary, at ſuch a time, that not a ſingle ſoul ſhould appear at any one of the windows; or elſe from a dray, on which ſtood a number of ill-looking fellows, apparently intent on miſchief.

In Palace Yard a ſtone was thrown, which ſhattered one of the ſide windows. On his Majeſty's return from St. James's, the ſame gang of ruffians followed his coach, and juſt as it turned under the gateway of the Palace, a ſtone was thrown, and alſo an oyſter-ſhell, which went through the glaſſes of the coach.

A melancholy accident happened to one of the leaders of the eight horſes; an old man, many years in the Mews, who was thrown down by the mob; and the fore and hind wheels of the coach going over both thighs, they were broken in a terrible manner.

The King, throughout the whole of the riot, diſplayed the cool magnanimity for which the family have been diſtinguiſhed. At the time the glaſs of the coach was broken, he ſaid to Lord Weſtmoreland—"That's a ſhot;" and, inſtead of leaning back in the carriage, or ſtriving to avoid the aſſaſſin, he pointed to the round hole in the pane, and examined it. But this was not all:—he went into his private coach, to go from St. James's to the Queen's houſe, in the midſt of the wildeſt commotion of the multitude, thereby expoſing himſelf, almoſt without guards, to their fury; and then it was that his Majeſty's perſon was moſt imminently in danger.

The mob again ruſhed upon the carriage; and one miſcreant, in a green coat, endeavoured to open the door.

This attack was made by 16 or 17 ruffians, who iſſued forth from the grand maſs of the mob. A gentleman of the Navy office, who ſtood by at the time, put his hand into his pocket, and cocked a brace of piſtols which he had with him; but, ſeeing the Horſe-guards at a diſtance, it immediately occurred to him that their aſſiſtance would be more effectual than his own, and he therefore ran with the utmoſt ſpeed toward them, and brought them to the reſcue of his Sovereign; but, fortunately, his Majeſty's coachman had already extricated the carriage from the mob; and the ruffians had joined the crowd, ſo as to render it impoſſible to mark any one of them.

His Majeſty's body coachman declared, in his examination at the Bar of the Houſe of Lords, that he had never been ſo frightened in his life, as he

 was

was while the mob was preffing round the carriage. He was fearful of putting his horfes into a gallop, as they were fo full of fpirit as to render him apprehenfive that he fhould not be able to ftop them; and he was equally afraid of preferving his ufual pace, left he might expofe his Sovereign to ftill more ferious dangers. The manner in which he ftated his embaraffment difplayed the moft grateful zeal, and the moft feeling heart.

On the return from the Palace to the Mews, the coach was attacked, and all the glaffes were broken; juft as it was turning into the Mews-gate, a ftout fellow, with a bludgeon, completed the demolition of the only glafs of which a fingle particle remained, and was proceeding to deftroy the carved work, &c. when one of the King's Footmen, with more fpirit than prudence, interpofed, and had nearly been maffacred by the cowardly ruffians, who followed him into the Mews, whence they were expelled by a party of the Guards. After the King had paffed through the Park, the avenues to Weftminfter Hall were very prudently clofed: the crowd then flocked to Storey's gate, and fledge hammers being procured, a party were preparing to force open the great gate, when a gentleman prefent recommended them to commit no violence, as a ftrong guard was near at hand. This prudent admonition was anfwered by repeated invectives, and a cry of "Start him: Start him!" And the Gentleman would probably have been maffacred, but for the humane affiftance of the Mafter of Storey's-gate Coffee Houfe, who facilitated his efcape.

The troops, during the whole of the bufinefs this day, conducted themfelves with the utmoft propriety. The zeal they difplayed in protecting the perfon of the King, and the confequent welfare of the Nation, reflects equal honour on them as men, and as foldiers.

One of the Horfe-guards was going to cut down a man, whom he conceived to have made the attack on his Sovereign; but the humane interpofition of his Majefty, who declared he was not the perfon, faved his life.

A third account ftates the affair in the following manner:

At half paft two o'clock, St. James's Park, from Buckingham Houfe to the Horfe Guards, was one living mafs! There could not be lefs than 150,000 people prefent; and from the Horfe Guards to the Parliament Houfe the ftreets were as much crowded by the populace.

A loud and conftant cry was made, of "Down with Pitt," "No War," "Give us Bread," "No Famine."

Several ftones or other articles were thrown in the park and in the ftreets; nine of which (it was laft night depofed before Mr. Juftice Bond and other Magiftrates, by the attendants and the Peace Officers) reached and ftruck the King's coach; one is fuppofed to be a bullet, as it broke a hole large enough to admit the top of a fmall finger, and fhivered the glafs downward: this was done, as is fufpected, from a window in Margaret-ftreet, near the Abbey.

Another was juft as the coach was turning under the gateway of St. James's Palace, as the proceffion returned back.

As the King was returning in his private coach to Buckingham Houfe to dinner, attended only by his two footmen behind, juft as the carriage had turned out of the paved paffage that leads from the garden-gate, the horfe-path under the garden-wall was filled up with people, who obftructed the

paffage

paſſage for a ſhort time, and in a daring manner inſulted his Majeſty; when ſome of the Life-Guardmen, mounted as returning from duty to the Horſe Guards, being informed of the circumſtances, rode back, and relieved his Majeſty from the dilemma.

All the windows of the ſtate coach were broke before it could be conveyed into the coach-houſe.

Seven perſons are in cuſtody for the outrage on his Majeſty, one of whom is accuſed of forcing the door of the coach. An order was ſent from the Duke of Portland's Office to have them kept in cloſe confinement.

His Majeſty was accompanied in the ſtate-carriage by the Earl of Weſtmoreland and Lord Onſlow. The former very narrowly eſcaped the ſtone which entered the Royal carriage. The King appeared deeply affected by the clamours which ſurrounded him, more than by the coarſe and unworthy indignities which were offered.

In the Park, on his return, when the carriage was ſtopt, he ſhewed evident ſigns of agitation. His face was fluſhed and ſwollen, his eyes were momentarily turned from ſide to ſide, and his manner evinced the utmoſt perturbation.

EVIDENCE LAID BEFORE THE TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

MINUTES of the Evidence of the Witneſſes examined by the Houſe of Lords, upon the 29th Day of October, 1795; a Copy of which was communicated to the Houſe of Commons, from their Lordſhips, on the 30th Day of October, 1795.

Mr. JOHN WALFORD, of Pall Mall, Haberdaſher, was called in; and being ſworn, was examined as follows:

WAS you called on this day by the high conſtable?

I was.

Upon what duty?

The office of a conſtable, which I ſerve at preſent.

Where was you ſtationed; and what part of the attendance had you?

I was ſtationed by Mr. Jones, the high conſtable, at the Horſe Guards.

Did you place yourſelf according to that direction?

Yes.

Did you attend his Majeſty's coach from the Horſe Guards to the Houſe of Lords?

Yes; on the right hand ſide of his Majeſty's carriage.

Give an account of what you obſerved in that attendance?

On entering into Parliament Street, I obſerved one man in particular among the crowd very active; which I obſerved to Mr. Stockdale, my brother conſtable, at the time. This man was running by the ſide of the coach, calling out "No war! Down with George!" And on our entrance into Palace Yard, I obſerved ſomething came with great velocity from the foot pavement, as I thought; on which I obſerved to Mr. Stockdale, "Good "God! the glaſs is broke! That muſt ſurely be a ball." His Majeſty then paſſed on to the Houſe, and I obſerved the man with the crowd perfectly quiet. Immediately on his Majeſty's coming out of the Houſe, they ſet

ſet up a hooting and hiſſing. I did not obſerve the man any more, parti cularly, till I got into the Park; I then perceived him frquently ſtoop down, but whether he picked up any thing or not I cannot ſay; but at that time there were many ſtones thrown about. Hearing him make the ſame exclamation again, I told him, if not quiet, I moſt aſſuredly ſhould take him into cuſtody.

The exclamation, of "Down with George!" again?

Yes; his ſtill repeating it; when I came oppoſite to Carleton Gardens, I made one or two attempts to ſeize him, by putting my hands between the horſe guards. Finding I could not do it, without danger of being trod upon, I requeſted one of them would draw back; upon finding which I immediately ſeized him, and drew him in cloſe to the carriage, and conveyed him to the Court Yard of St. James's, where I believe he now is.

On what part of the pavement was the coach, when the glaſs was broken?

Almoſt the centre of the coach way, juſt going from croſſing of Bridge Street; juſt oppoſite to a bow window houſe by the Ordnance Office, on this ſide of the Office.

Whether you are underſtood right, that you ſaw whatever ſtruck the glaſs as it came through the air, before it touched the glaſs?

Yes.

You cannot ſay what it was?

It is utterly impoſſible, it came with ſuch velocity.

Whether it ſtruck upon the glaſs ſide of the carriage, or paſſed through the carriage firſt?

It ſtruck the glaſs which was up; immediately after I ſaw his Majeſty look down.

What ſize did you apprehend this miſchievous weapon to be of?

I obſerved at the time it muſt be the ſize of a marble or bullet.

Do you judge from its ſize in the air, or from the hole it made in the glaſs?

It was impoſſible to judge of its ſize as it paſſed, but I judged from the hole it made in the glaſs.

Whether, at the time this weapon paſſed, you obſerved the man where you have before deſcribed?

I ſaw him immediately after; at the time my eyes were not on the pavement.

When you then ſaw him, was he upon the pavement?

Whether on the foot pavement or not, I cannot tell. The horſe guards were between the mob and the conſtable.

Did you obſerve any thing in the hands of the man during any part of the time!

I did not.

Have you any reaſon to know whether he had any thing in his hand or not; any recollection of it?

I did not ſee his hands at all.

Whereabouts was it that you ſaw him frequently ſtooping down?

In the Park, by Carleton Gardens.

When you ſaid, "Good God! it muſt be a ball!" did you mean to ſay, that it muſt be diſcharged by an inſtrument?

The

The witnefs was directed to withdraw.

Then John Walford was again called in, and examined as follows:

When you faid, "Good God! it muft be a ball!" did you mean to fay that it muft be difcharged by an inftrument?

I made the obfervation, that nothing could throw it with that velocity, but an inftrument.

Whether you obferved any other outrage committed on the carriage in which his Majefty was?

Several.

State them to the houfe?

By repeatedly throwing ftones.

Do you mean by the fame man, or others?

I do not pofitively fay that this man threw any:—by others many were thrown.

You have ftated that you heard this man ufe the expreffion, "Down with "George!" No war!"—Did you hear any other perfons ufe expreffions of treafon or difrefpect?

Several repeating the fame.

Did they appear to be perfons aiding or abetting this man, or accidental perfons, differently difperfed in the crowd?

I cannot fay whether they were immediately of his party; but there was one party, whom I obferved the whole of the way, keeping by the fide of the carriage, both to the Houfe of Peers and back again; the fame people.

Were they merely men; or men and women indifcriminately?

They were entirely confifting of men and boys.

Did you conceive any of them fpoke with a French accent, fo as that you might think they were Frenchmen?

No, I did not.

Are any of them in cuftody?

There are three, I believe.

Upon your feizing the man, did he make refiftance, or fhew any alarm; or what was his behaviour on the occafion?

He ftruggled very much to get away; on which I was obliged to have the affiftance of one or two other conftables to convey him.

Was he alarmed?

Very much.

Did he fay any thing?——What was his behaviour after you feized him?

He faid, "Good God! that I fhould ever be fufpected of difloyalty!"

After he was feized, was he encouraged, or otherwife addreffed by any of the other perfons whom you remarked?

It was impoffible any of them could get to us for the horfe; but he kept repeating the whole way, "He thought there could be no harm in ac-"quainting his Majefty with their grievances."

At the time you feized him, and he ftruggled, did any body attempt to refcue him?

I conceive it was impoffible they could attempt any thing of the kind, from the horfe clofing immediately upon us. We were furrounded directly by them.

Was

Was it generally obferved by the perfons who furrounded the King's carriage, that this man was taken into cuftody?

Do you mean the conftables, or the mob?

The mob?

I really cannot fay.

Did you fearch the man you feized?

We did.

Did you find any weapon about him?

There was nothing at all found in his pockets of any kind.

Did the man appear to be in liquor?

No.

Did the ball appear to come in an horizontal direction?

I really cannot tell, it came with fuch velocity.

The witnefs was directed to withdraw.

Then Mr. JOHN STOCKDALE, Bookfeller, of Piccadilly, was called in; and being fworn, was examined as follows:

Are you ferving the office of conftable now?

Yes.

Had you notice from the high conftable to attend to-day?

Yes.

Where was you placed?

At the Horfe Guards.

Was you all the time near the laft witnefs Walford?

I was.

Give an account, then, what you obferved from the Horfe Guards?

I obferved a great crowd, and a number of perfons, about forty or fifty, going near the King's coach, hiffing and making a great deal of noife, and crying out, "No war! No George!" and a number of expreffions of that kind.

What other expreffions?

A number of others, which I did not take particular notice what they were. Mr. Walford mentioned to me, he obferved fome of the perfons that were very active in hiffing and making a riot. Nothing particular happened, till I obferved, when we came to the narrow part of Palace Yard, when I faw fomething thrown at his Majefty's carriage, and heard it hit the glafs. Mr. Walford, who was ftanding clofe by me (I was then within a few yards of the carriage) remarked to me, that he thought that was the perfon who flung it, and defired me to affift in feizing him, and pointed out the man. But as the crowd was very thick, I did not take any particular notice, as I thought it impoffible to feize any man, the crowd was going fo quick. Nothing further paffed till his Majefty alighted, when Mr. Walford obferved the man alluded to ftanding in company with fome others near the carriage: he made this remark, that he believed that was the man that flung the ftone, and that was fo very active; and pointed him out, I believe, to one of the Bow Street perfons: I don't know the perfon, but they faid his name was Kennedy. After his Majefty was in the coach, and fet off on his return home to the palace, we obferved this fame perfon, with a number of others, that had followed the coach at the fame time downwards, keeping company

on

on the ſide of the coach in a very diſorderly manner, hiſſing and groaning, and calling out, "No war!" and making uſe of a number of diſagreeable expreſſions.

What expreſſions?

Such as "No war!" and I believe "No King!" And this perſon, with ſeveral others that went down and came up, making frequent exertions to get through from amongſt the horſe to the King's carriage, which by main force we put back betwixt the horſes. When we had got about the middle of the Park, the conſtable who was with me (I believe his name is Walford) addreſſed himſelf particularly to the young man that was taken up, deſiring him to be peaceable and behave better, or he would take him into cuſtody. He, with others, appeared to be very inſolent, to ſet the conſtable at defiance; upon which he was ſeized and kept in cuſtody till we got to St. James's. Nothing elſe paſſed that I know of.

Did you ſee any body in the act of throwing?

I did not.

Was you or Walford foremoſt when the glaſs broke?

We were nearly together? he was a yard or two before me.

Did Walford make any obſervation to you upon it.

He did.

What was it?

He ſaid, "I am certain that was the man that flung the ſtone; let us ſeize him,"—alluding to the perſon that was afterwards taken up, a young man in a grey coat and a black collar.

Did you obſerve the ſtroke on the glaſs?

I did not, but I ſaw whatever it was that was thrown very diſtinctly, and heard it go againſt the glaſs. It ſeemed to me to have the appearance of an halfpenny; and I ſaw it ſo diſtinct, that it appeared as if the force of the throw was ſpent before it hit the glaſs, and by that means, that it could not break the glaſs, though I do not know that it did not.

Did you obſerve if the glaſs was broke?

No, I did not.

Did Walford make any obſervations to you, with regard to the ſtroke upon the glaſs?

I do not recollect—but I really believe that what I ſaw thrown was not what broke the glaſs, becauſe other perſons that were near me heard ſomething that went paſt with great velocity againſt the glaſs, and that was not the caſe with what I ſaw thrown againſt the glaſs; as I have ſaid before, the force was ſpent.

Did Walford make any obſervations to you upon the velocity with which it was thrown?

I am not certain whether he did or not; but I think he did not think that what I ſaw thrown was what broke the glaſs?

Do you recollect that Walford at the time ſaid any thing to you of what he thought broke the glaſs?

I am not certain; I think he thought it was ſomething that was thrown with great velocity, but I am not certain.

Did he ſay what that ſomething was?

He did not, but I am as perfectly ſatisfied as I can be, that there were two ſubſtances thrown at the ſame time, for the reaſon I mentioned before.

3 You

You ſaid, there were forty or fifty perſons went back from here;——do you mean to ſay they were the ſame parties?

Yes; and ſeveral of them ſeemed to know each other, as if they belonged to the ſame gang, if I may be allowed ſuch an expreſſion. My reaſon for it is, that there were ſeveral ſtanding together. The young man taken up was reſting his ſhoulder on one of his companions in a friendly manner.—I aſked him, at St. James's, "if he knew the perſon whoſe ſhoulder he was reſting on?" And he denied having any knowledge of the perſons he was ſtanding with.

When Walford talked of a ſubſtance thrown, did you underſtand him to mean, thrown with the hand?

Yes; but there were other perſons preſent that differed from him in opinion, and thought it was a ſhot from a window where there were no perſons looking out. I looked at the window myſelf. I gave credit for that opinion, becauſe what I ſaw thrown, though I heard it hit the glaſs, could not break it, at leaſt I thought it could not; nor could I believe the window was broke, till I enquired of the ſervants about the coach, and then that convinced me that it was ſomething thrown from ſome window, a marble, or ſomething of that kind, with great velocity.

State the particular part of the ſtreet where you ſaw the ſubſtance like a halfpenny ſtrike the window?

It was betwixt the two Palace Yards, thrown from the right-hand ſide, in the narrow part.

You attended the carriage from the one Palace Yard to the other——did you hear any other ſubſtance ſtrike the window between the one Palace Yard and the other?

I did not; and for that reaſon, that if there was any thing that went through the window, it muſt have been at the ſame time, for I did not hear any ſecond ſtroke againſt the glaſs.

Do you recollect who the perſons were that thought it muſt have come from a window?

I do not; but it was the converſation of the different conſtables that were about the carriage after his Majeſty alighted, and the opinion of ſeveral: I do not recollect who aſſerted the fact of its being thrown from a window.

Have you ſince ſeen the hole in his Majeſty's carriage?

I have ſeen one hole; that was after the carriage got into the palace, and that was made, I believe, by a tile or ſomething of the kind, thrown at the carriage as it was entering the palace-gate in returning.

Did the brick hit his Majeſty's carriage on the ſame ſide as the ſubſtance hit it in Palace Yard; was it on the right-hand ſide, or the left?

On the left, I believe.

Did you ſee the brick hit it?

No; I did not.

You ſaw no other hole in his Majeſty's carriage?

No.

You think ſomething was flung out of a window of a houſe;—do you know the houſe?

Certainly I could not; nor within fifty yards.

Do you know the Ordnance Office?

I do not.

You mentioned "Walford had taken notice of the activity of a man; was that when the glass was broke, or before that time?

I believe he mentioned that circumstance to me before the stone was thrown; about half way between the Horse Guards and Palace Yard.

Was the person whom Mr. Walford pointed out to you in Palace Yard, as the person who threw the stone, the person who was afterwards taken up?

Yes.

And Mr. Walford said, "that was the man who threw the stone?

Yes; he said, he believed that was the man, and pointed him out to Kennedy.

Where did he point him out to the constable Kennedy?

In Palace Yard, within about ten yards of his Majesty's carriage, after his Majesty alighted.

Was that the same man he pointed out to you in Parliament-street?

I believe it was; but he then pointed him out with several others, but not him in particular.

The witness was directed to withdraw.

Then Mr. JOHN WALFORD was called in again, and examined as follows:

Did you point out, in Palace Yard, to Mr. Stockdale, a man who had thrown a stone?

I certainly mentioned to Mr. Stockdale, that I thought that was the man who threw the stone or the other matter, or whatever it was that broke the window: my reason for so doing was the activity he had shewn the whole of the way.

Did you hear a conversation about an open window?

I heard one of his Majesty's footmen make the remark, and asked me if I had seen it. I told him I had not.

You have said, in one of your answers, that you thought it was a bullet from an instrument; you have now said, it was a stone;—reconcile these answers.

I certainly, in the first instance, thought it was a bullet, or some other hard substance, from the velocity with which it came. Mr Stockdale said he thought it was a halfpenny, or something of that kind. I said I really could not tell what it was, but that it must be something rounder and harder to occasion that blow.

The witness was directed to withdraw.

Then Mr. JAMES PARKER, of Pimlico, one of his Majesty's footmen, was called in; and, being sworn, was examined as follows:

You attended his Majesty to-day from his palace to the House of Lords?

Yes.

Where was your place?

At the coach door, on the right-hand.

Relate what you saw there.

We were coming down by the Ordnance Office, and about two doors from there, there was a kind of a ball, or a marble, or something of that kind, that whisked by my face; it appeared to come with great velocity,

right

right ſtrait forwards. I immediately ſaid to one of the yeomen, " I think that came from a gun, a wind gun, for I heard no report." I immediately looked round, could ſee nothing; I looked at the glaſs of the carriage, and ſaw a little hole. I looked round, to ſee if I could ſee where the ball or ſubſtance, or whatever it was, came from, and I perceived a window open—there was nobody at it, which gave me reaſon to think it came from that direction.—I ſaid to the yeoman, " I thought it was very ſtrange where that could come from," or ſomething to that effect.——I don't know any thing more.

Can you point out the houſe?

It has green outſide windows.

Was that the only empty window?

I did not obſerve any other.

Was it a window in a firſt floor, or where?

A parlour window.

What part of the glaſs was hit?

Rather lower than the middle; it was no great way from my head: I had hold of the handle of the door.

You ſay this was one of the houſes near the Ordnance;——was it a houſe with a bow window?

A bow, not of the parlour, but of the floor above it.

Was it not the houſe next to the narrow paſſage that comes into Palace Yard, next the Cathedral?

It was the end houſe, there is no other.

You made no enquiry there?

No.

Do you believe the hole in the glaſs was made by the bullet, or other round ſubſtance, that you heard whizzed by you?

I have no doubt about it.

Do you think that to have done what you deſcribe, it could have been thrown by a hand?

I think it impoſſible to have come in that way, and leave ſo ſmall a hole in the glaſs.

Did you obſerve any thing elſe thrown about the ſame time?

Nothing at all.

Did you give ſuch attention to the houſe at the time, as to ſay which window it came from?

No; I could not tell that it came from the window or the ſtreet; I only thought that it might come from the window.

Was there any perſon in any other window?

I do not recollect there was; I was ſo timid I looked into the carriage, and ſaw his Majeſty was not hurt.

You have nothing more to relate?

No.

The witneſs was directed to withdraw.

Then JOHN SAYER, Officer of Bow-Street, was called in; and being ſworn, was examined as follows:

Was you attending the proceſſion to-day?

Yes.

Was you near his Majeſty's carriage when it came into Palace Yard?

Yes.

What did you obſerve?

I obſerved ſomething come againſt the carriage.

Was you near the carriage?

Cloſe to it.

What did you obſerve?

I could not tell what it was—it made a craſh.

Againſt what part of the carriage?

Againſt the glaſs of the door.

The centre, or pannel?

The centre.

You did not ſee in what direction it came?

No; I looked up immediately.

What effect had it on the glaſs?

I ſaw the glaſs broke.

In what manner?

Apparently with a hole in the middle of the glaſs, with a cracked ſtar up it.

Did you ſee any thing thrown at that time?

I did not.

Was it a large hole, or what?

I take it it might be as big as my finger: a round hole; apparently round.

Did you obſerve any open window?

I did not.

Was any other officer with you at that time?

No.

Where was Kennedy?

A little before me; near the carriage.

Do you recollect the place where it happened?

Yes.

Do you know the houſe oppoſite to where it happened?

Yes.

Which houſe is it?

To the beſt of my knowledge it is the houſe next the Abbey.

Whoſe houſe is it?

I do not know.

Did you accompany the carriage going and coming?

Yes.

Then you ſaw what ſort of people they were---did you take notice of thoſe who were guilty of the riots and inſults going and coming.

Yes.

Did they appear the ſame or a different ſet of men?

There were different men at different places, but ſome followed all the way.

What was the number, as far as you can ſtate, that you think followed all the way?

There might be thirty or forty of each ſide the carriage.

Did

Did thofe thirty or forty appear to know one another?

I cannot fay that.

What was the nature of the infult they offered, in language, or how?

They were fwearing and hiffing.

What language?

They hallooed out, "Peace! Peace!"

Any thing further?

I heard nothing further.

You did not hear them fay, "Peace! and no GEORGE!"

No.

Did you mean thirty or forty on each fide the carriage, or only thirty or forty on both fides the carriage?

On each.

Then you mean eighty?

If I was to fay an hundred on each fide I fhould not exceed.

Do you mean thefe hundred came and returned?

No; they might for what I know.

Did you fee the man that Walford took into cuftody?

I faw a man that was taken into cuftody, but do not know it was the fame he took into cuftody.

Was the perfon you faw in cuftody one of thirty or forty that were turbulent?

I faw him amongft a number of other perfons that were hiffing, when the conftable laid hold of him.

He was feized in the Park?

Yes.

Do you recollect feeing him before, in Margaret Street or Palace Yard?

No.

But you had feen him before, among the crowd?

Yes.

Where had you feen him?

I faw one of the horfe foldiers put him afide, juft before the conftable laid hold of him.

In the Park?

Yes.

Then you had not feen him before?

No.

Be quite clear as as to the number of perfons who followed the coach the whole way going and coming—whether thirty or forty on each fide, or more?

I fhould fuppofe there might be more than that going and coming.

The witnefs was directed to withdraw.

Then CHRISTOPHER KENNEDY, Bow-Street Officer, was called in; and being fworn, was examined as follows:

Was you in attendance to-day?

Yes.

Was you near the carriage of his Majefty?

Yes.

Did you fee any thing pafs in Margaret Street, or Palace Yard?

I heard

I heard fomething come againft the glafs of the door of the ftate coach—I looked up, and faw a hole in the glafs, and the glafs ftarred.

What fort of a hole?

A fmall hole.

What do you fuppofe it was made with?

I do not know what it was made with; I do not think it could be a ftone?

Why?

If it had been a ftone, I fhould think it would have made a larger hole.

Did you obferve any open window oppofite to the carriage at that time?

I did not.

Did you obferve a number of people about the coach?

Yes.

Did they follow the coach going, and on its return?

Yes.

Did they appear to be the fame party on its coming and returning?

Yes, they did.

In what manner did they behave?

Some huzzaing, fome hiffing, and fome calling for peace.

Any thing on the return?

On returning, I heard feveral fomethings come againft the ftate coach.

What things?

I do not know. I did fee one ftone, and that about as big as a large walnut.

Did you go with the coach till it got back to the palace?

Yes.

Was there a glafs broke then?

Entering the Stable Yard, I heard fomething come againft the glafs.

The witnefs was directed to withdraw.

Here the Minutes of the evidence clofed; when the Addrefs was read a fecond time. The Houfe then agreed with the Addrefs *nemine contradicente*, and the blanks were ordered to be filled up.

A Meffage was fent to acquaint the Lords, that the Commons agreed with their Addrefs; and the Houfe adjourned till to-morrow.

Examination of the Perfons taken into Cuftody upon Sufpicion of being fome of thofe who infulted his Majefty on Thurfday.

Bow-Street, Thurfday Evening, Oct. 29.

KIDD WAKE, aged Twenty-feven, a Journeyman Printer.

Lemon Cafeby, a conftable, ordered to attend the King, depofed, that he obferved the prifoner, foon after the carriage had entered the park, hifs, groan, and call out "No War!" vehemently and repeatedly. The witnefs endeavoured to fecure him, but fell down in the attempt; when he got up, he obferved the prifoner again in the fame act; he kept his eye upon him as far as the Horfe Guards, and there loft fight of him.

After his Majefty alighted at the Houfe of Lords, a Mr. Walford came up, and obferved to the witnefs and other Peace Officers, that he fhould know the man that had broke the glafs of the coach, defcribing him to wear a green coat with a black collar.

On the return of his Majefty, in the park, near St. James's, he obferved the prifoner fcuffling with Mr. Walford, to whofe affiftance he went, and

they

they ſecured him; Mr. Walford not attending to identify his perſon, the deſcription he had given to the witneſs of the man who threw the ſtone in Parliament-ſtreet could not be received in evidence.

The priſoner ſaid he was in the ſervice of Mr. Noble, a printer; was a married man; and by hiſſing and groaning at his Majeſty, he meant only to let the King ſee "*he was diſſatisfied with the war.*"

JOHN DINHAM, aged Twenty, a Journeyman Baker.

Chriſtopher Jones, one of the Patrole of this Office, ſaid, on the return of the ſtate-coach from St. James's towards the Mews, he obſerved the priſoner a little beyond Marlborough Houſe ſtoop at a heap of lime, and pick up a large ſtone, which he threw at the carriage amidſt ſeveral others; that it broke the glaſſes; that the priſoner picked up ſeveral pieces of the glaſs which fell, and put them into his pocket; and that the coach was ſtopped juſt before it got to the Mews-gate, by a dray croſſing the ſtreet; mud and ſtones were thrown at the coach, coachman, and horſes. The priſoner he ſaw again pick up an oyſter ſhell, which he threw through the coach; he got cloſe to him, and when the coach had entered the Mews, the witneſs made, as a general obſervation, pretty loud, "We had better not go in; the gates will be ſhut, and we ſhall all be cloſed!"

The priſoner and ſeveral others did not go into the Mews; he followed the priſoner, who ſtopped, near the end of St. Martin's-lane, an acquaintance, with whom he converſed, and then pulled out of his pocket two pieces of glaſs, which he exhibited with apparent exultation, ſaying, "*I did for it.*" He then walked up St. Martin's-lane, the witneſs following him. When a little out of the crowd, he tapped him upon the ſhoulder, ſaying, "You have thrown an apple at an *old Woman* and hurt her. Go with me into Long-Acre. A Gentleman there that ſaw it will meet you." At firſt he went readily with him; but at the end of Long-Acre he made a ſtop, and ſaid, "I begin to think you are going to take me to Bow-ſtreet." "To be ſure I am," ſaid the witneſs, and immediately did ſo.

The priſoner did not deny any part of this charge; ſaid his employer lived in Seven Dials.

GEORGE GREGORY, about Seventeen, a Jeweller.

Mr. Irons, a ſpectator of his Majeſty's proceſſion to and from the Houſe, had placed himſelf, on the return of the carriages, at the corner of St. James's-ſtreet; he ſaid, juſt as the King's coach was turning into the Palace-gate, a ſtone was thrown immediately from near where he ſtood, which broke the door glaſs; upon turning round inſtantly he obſerved the priſoner's arm dropping as from the act of throwing; he immediately laid hold of and ſecured him, and delivered him into the cuſtody of M'Manus; he did not ſee the ſtone go from his hand.

Mr. Northam, a Jeweller, in Frith-ſtreet, ſaid the priſoner was his apprentice; that he had upon application granted him leave to go and ſee the King; and gave him an excellent character.

Mr. Fletcher, a very reſpectable and eminent Attorney, of Gerrard-ſtreet, ſaid he knew the family and connections of the priſoner, adding a knowledge of his character, which was highly reputable.

The Magiſtrate felt bound to commit him for another hearing, but gave ſtrict direction he ſhould be delivered into the particular care of Mr. Pen-

nick,

nick, of Tothillfields Bridewell, to prevent his associating with the prisoners.

EDWARD COLLINS, Keeper of an Eating-house, Back-Street, Borough.

William Palin, a journeyman glazier, said, he was standing at the corner of St. James's-street, when his Majesty returned; the prisoner was standing near him. When the carriage was turning into the gateway, he observed him take his left hand up from his pocket, and give it a forcible jirk: he saw flying in the air a stone, in a direct line from his hand, which broke the glass of the state-coach: the prisoner turned away from the spot, when Gregory was taken, which was at that instant; the witness followed Gregory, proclaiming to the officers, "That boy is innocent, I saw the man that did it, and shall know him again if I see him."

One of the Police Officers attended him for that purpose, and in about a quarter of an hour he observed the prisoner in the Court-yard, and had him secured.

At eleven at night the examinations closed. The prisoners were all conveyed to prison for further examination; and information of the evidence was sent by the Magistrate to the Duke of Portland's Office.

FRIDAY morning Kidd Wake was brought before the Sitting Magistrate for re-examination.

Thomas Walford, a haberdasher of Pall-mall, and a constable for the Parish of St. James, said that he received a precept to attend his Majesty from the Horse-Guards to the Parliament House, and was desired by Mr. Jones, the High Constable, not to leave the procession as on former occasions at the Horse Guards, but attend it to the palace.

As soon as he joined the procession, he observed to Mr. Stockdale, his brother officer, how very particularly active the prisoner was in hissing, hooting, and calling out *No War!* And as the procession was passing through St. Margaret-street, he saw something small go with great velocity against one of the coach windows, which made a small hole iu the glass, and at this time the prisoner disappeared; but when the King had got into the House of Peers, he again observed the prisoner in the front of the crowd; when some other officers having observed the prisoner's active conduct proposed to take him into custody, but on consideration it was declined. When his Majesty came out of the House, he lost sight of the prisoner till the procession got through the Horse Guards, when he observed the prisoner, and about 30 more, close to the carriage, grinning at the King, groaning, &c. calling out *No War! Down George!* but whether the prisoner said *Down George*, he could not positively say. As the procession was passing from the Horse Guards towards Carleton-house gates, six or seven stones were flung at the carriage, and about the time the stones were flung, he observed the prisoner stoop two or three times; but whether he flung any of the stones he could not positively say. The witness remonstrated with the prisoner on the impropriety of his conduct, who paid no attention to the remonstrance, till at length on passing along the Mall, the witness, with the assistance of one of the Horse Guards, secured him.

Mr. Hall Wake, the prisoner's brother, an eminent builder, attended, and offered bail for his brother, but the Magistrate not thinking himself justified

in admitting him to bail in the prefent ftage of the bufinefs, he was committed for further examination.

Robert Bryant was charged with breaking the windows of the ftate-carriage of his Majefty.

Miles M'Cabe faid he was paffing through the King's Mews about half-paft three o'clock on Thurfday afternoon, where he found a large concourfe of people affembled, and a great number of them throwing ftones, mud, &c. at the King's ftate coach, and juft before the coach was got into the coach-houfe, he obferved the prifoner, who was ftanding about five yards from him, pick up a ftone with his right hand, and throw it at the carriage; and the ftone entered the carriage on the right fide.—Then the witnefs followed the prifoner to the Rofe public-houfe, in Rofe-ftreet, Long-acre; where the prifoner, meeting with fome companions, fat down with them. The witnefs ran to Bow-ftreet for Carpmeal, the officer, who apprehended the prifoner. ——Committed for further examination.

FURTHER EXAMINATION OF THE RIOTERS.

Public Office, Bow-Street.

In confequence of a fummons, Ann Delves, cook to —— Blunt, Efq. of Abingdon-ftreet, Weftminfter, was brought to the above office.—Mr. Bond, the Sitting Magiftrate, informed her that information had been received, by the Secretary of State, that fhe could give confiderable intelligence of a confpiracy againft the life of his Majefty and the reft of the Royal Family. She profeffed herfelf quite a ftranger to the bufinefs, and could not even conjecture from what the report could have arifen. Mr. Bond at length told her the ground of the report, which was, that the Secretary of State had received an anonymous letter, ftating that Mr. Blunt's hair-dreffer faid, laft Friday, that he had wifhed he had a fword on Thurfday, he would have murdered the King, and calling him feveral opprobrious names; and that there would not be one of the Royal Family in exiftence in the courfe of a month; and he fhould like to wafh his hands in the blood of the Judges; and that if Government fhould choofe to take notice of the information contained in the letter, Ann Delves, cook to Mr. Blunt, would be a material evidence, as fome of the expreffions were made in her prefence. The above is the fubftance of the letter.—Ann Delves was aftonifhed at hearing the letter read, and profeffed herfelf an entire ftranger to the bufinefs, and believed the hair-dreffer quite innocent, as he was a different kind of a man, and was a friend to the King.

Mr. Bond obferved, that if what fhe faid was true, he hoped the author of the letter would be found out and brought to condign punifhment. The anonymous letter, with Ann Delves's anfwer, was returned to Mr. Ford, Secretary to the Duke of Portland.

John Dinham, a Journeyman Baker, who ftands charged with breaking the glafs of his Majefty's State-carriage, laft Thurfday, on its return from the Palace to the Mews, by throwing an oyfter fhell and a ftone at it, was brought from Tothill-fields Bridewell, to be admitted to bail, when his mafter and another refpectable tradefman attended to offer bail; but on the magiftrate informing them they were to be bound in 50l. for the prifoner,

to anſwer to the charge of aiding in breeding a riot, they declined, they ſuppoſing they were only to be bound in 20l. for the priſoner's good behaviour till the next Seſſions; the priſoner was accordingly remanded back to priſon. Bail was offered for Kidd Wake and Edward Collins, who are charged on ſuſpicion of throwing ſtones, &c. at the State-carriage, while his Majeſty was in it, as he was going and returning from the Houſe of Peers.

Mr. Bond informed the bail, he had received no inſtructions from Government to admit him to bail.

LONDON GAZETTE, Oct. 31.

At the Court at St. James's, the 31ſt day of October, 1795, preſent,

The KING's Moſt Excellent MAJESTY,

His Royal Highneſs the Prince of Wales,	Earl Spencer,
His Royal Highneſs the Duke of York,	Lord Grenville,
Lord Chancellor,	Lord Onſlow,
Lord Preſident,	Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer,
Lord Privy Seal,	Mr. Vice Chamberlain,
Duke of Portland,	Mr. Villiers,
Lord Chamberlain,	Field Marſhal Sir George Howard,
Earl of Weſtmoreland,	Maſter of the Rolls,
Earl of Jerſey,	Mr. Secretary Dundas.

By the KING,

A PROCLAMATION.

GEORGE R.

Whereas, on the twenty-ninth day of this inſtant month of October, diverſe perſons, riotouſly aſſembled and ſtationed in different places in our city of Weſtminſter, proceeded to commit certain daring and highly criminal outrages, in groſs violation of the public peace, to the actual danger of our Royal Perſon, and to the interruption of our paſſage to and from our Parliament; we, therefore, with the advice of our Privy Council, in perſuance of an Addreſs from our two Houſes of Parliament, do hereby enjoin all Magiſtrates, and all other our loving ſubjects, to uſe their utmoſt endeavours to diſcover and cauſe to be apprehended the authors, actors, and abettors concerned in ſuch outrages, in order that they may be dealt with according to law;

* * On Friday evening their Majeſties and the Princeſſes went to Covent-Garden Theatre, to ſee the Comedy of The Rivals, and the Entertainment of Hartford-Bridge. The crowd in the ſtreets to ſee the Sovereign paſs was very great; and the Theatre was full in every part. The loyal ſongs, "God ſave the King," and "Rule Britannia," were both ſung, and both encored. Near the end of the play, a great degree of clamour was excited, by Captain Abſolute repeating, as his reaſon for fighting a duel, the words "I ſerve the King." In the midſt of it, Mr. Macmanus, an officer of Bow-ſtreet, walked on the ſtage, no perſon knew why, and placed himſelf oppoſite to the King's box. The noiſe then increaſed to an almoſt alarming degree, till Mr. Macmanus retired; and then it ſubſided. An odd accident happened as his Majeſty went to the Theatre: one of the Horſe ſoldiers piſtols in the holſter went off, and ſhot the next horſe in the ſhoulder. This gave riſe to a falſe, and perhaps malicious report, for it was induſtriouſly circulated, that his Majeſty had been fired at. An unuſual number of guards attended on this occaſion.

law: and we do hereby promiſe, that any perſon or perſons, other than thoſe actually concerned in doing any act by which our Royal Perſon was immediately endangered, who ſhall give information, ſo as that any of the authors, actors, or abettors concerned in ſuch outrages as aforeſaid, may be apprehended and brought to juſtice, ſhall receive a reward of ONE THOUSAND POUNDS, to be paid on conviction of every ſuch offender; which ſaid ſum of ONE THOUSAND POUNDS the Lords Commiſſioners of our Treaſury are hereby required and directed to pay accordingly. And we do further promiſe, that any perſon or perſons concerned in ſuch outrages as aforeſaid, other than ſuch as were actually concerned in any act by which our Royal Perſon was immediately endangered, who ſhall give information, ſo as that any of ſuch authors, actors, or abettors, as aforeſaid, ſhall be apprehended and brought to juſtice, ſhall, upon conviction of ſuch offender or offenders, receive our moſt gracious pardon.

Given at our Court at St. James's the thirty-firſt day of October, one thouſand ſeven hundred and ninety-five, in the thirty-ſixth year of our reign.

GOD ſave the King.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *Monday, November* 2.

The SPEAKER acquainted the Houſe, that he waited on his Majeſty laſt Saturday with the Addreſs of Congratulation.

THE ADDRESS.

Moſt Gracious Sovereign,

"We your Majeſty's moſt dutiful and loyal ſubjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in Parliament aſſembled, beg leave to approach your Majeſty, humbly to expreſs to your Majeſty our indignation and abhorrence at the daring outrages offered to your Majeſty in your Majeſty's paſſage to and from your Parliament. We cannot reflect, without the utmoſt concern, that there ſhould be found, within your Majeſty's dominions, any perſons ſo inſenſible of the happineſs which all your Majeſty's ſubjects derive from your Majeſty's juſt and mild government, and of the virtues which ſo eminently diſtinguiſh your Majeſty's character, as to be capable of theſe flagitious acts: and we beg leave humbly to lay before your Majeſty the earneſt wiſhes of your faithful Lords and Commons, in which we are confident we ſhall be joined by all deſcriptions of your Majeſty's ſubjects, that you will be graciouſly pleaſed to direct the moſt effectual meaſures to be taken, without delay, to diſcover the authors and abettors of crimes ſo atrocious; to which His Majeſty was pleaſed to give this moſt gracious anſwer:

"*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

"I receive, with great pleaſure, this additional proof of your uniform zeal and loyalty. I have too much reaſon to be aſſured of the affectionate and ſteady attachment of my people at large, to have felt any other ſentiment upon this occaſion than that of concern at ſo high a violation of the laws. I ſhall not fail to give ſuch directions as may beſt tend to bring to juſtice and puniſhment the perſons concerned in an offence ſo dangerous to the public tranquillity, and ſo injurious to our excellent Conſtitution."

HOUSE OF LORDS, WEDNESDAY, NOV. 4.

LORD MANSFIELD brought up copies of a Proclamation iſſued by his Majeſty, relative to the outrages committed againſt his perſon on Thurſday laſt, and of a Proclamation publiſhed this day relative to ſeditious Meetings, which are ordered to lie on the Table.

LORD GRENVILLE gave notice, that upon Friday next he would bring forward a Bill for the better ſecuring the ſafety of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, when the Proclamation would come to be diſcuſſed, and moved that their Lordſhips be ſummoned to attend upon that day.—Ordered.

COPY OF THE PROCLAMATION ALLUDED TO BY EARL MANSFIELD.

BY THE KING.

A PROCLAMATION.

GEORGE R.

WHEREAS it hath been repreſented to Us, that immediately before the opening of the preſent Seſſion of Parliament, a great number of Perſons were collected in the Fields in the Neighbourhood of the Metropolis, by Advertiſement and Hand-bills, and that divers inflammatory Diſcourſes were delivered to the Perſons ſo collected, and divers Proceedings were had, tending to create groundleſs Jealouſy and Diſcontent, and to endanger the Public Peace, and the Quiet and Safety of our faithful ſubjects: And whereas it has been alſo repreſented to Us, that divers Seditious and Treaſonable Papers have been lately diſtributed, tending to excite evil-diſpoſed Perſons to acts endangering Our Royal Perſon: And whereas ſuch proceedings have been followed on the day on which the preſent Seſſion of Parliament commenced, by acts of Tumult and Violence, and by daring and highly criminal Outrages, in direct violation of the Public Peace, to the immediate Danger of Our Royal Perſon, and to the Interruption of our Paſſage to and from our Parliament: And whereas great Uneaſineſs and Anxiety hath been produced in the minds of our faithful Subjects, by Rumours and Apprehenſions, that Seditious and Unlawful Aſſemblies are intended to be held by evil

evil-disposed Persons, and that such other criminal practices as aforesaid are intended to be repeated. We therefore have thought fit, by and with the Advice of our Privy Council, to enjoin and require, and We do hereby enjoin and require, all Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, and all other our Loving Subjects, throughout our Kingdom, to use the utmost Diligence to discourage, prevent, and suppress all Seditious and Unlawful Assemblies: And we do specially enjoin and command all our Loving Subjects who shall have cause to suspect that any such Assemblies are intended to be held in any Part of our Kingdom, to give the earliest information thereof to the Magistrates of the several districts within which it shall be suspected that the same are intended to be held; and if such Assemblies shall nevertheless in any case be actually held, to be aiding and assisting on being required thereto by the Civil Magistrate, in causing Persons delivering inflammatory Discourses in such Assemblies, and other principal Actors therein, to be forthwith apprehended, in order that they may be dealt with according to Law. And We have also thought fit, by and with the Advice aforesaid, to enjoin and require, and we do hereby enjoin and require all Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Mayors, Bailiffs, Constables, ahd all other our Loving Subjects throughout our Kingdom, to be in like manner aidlng and assisting in bringing to Justice all persons distributing such Seditious and Treasonable Papers aforesaid.

Given at our Court at St. James's, the Fourth day of November, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-five, in the Thirty-sixth year of our Reign.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

On the same Day was published the following Advertisement.

THE MERCHANTS, BANKERS and TRADERS of the City of London, are requested to attend at the London Tavern, on Friday, the 6th Instant, at 11 o'Clock, to take into Consideration the propriety of an Address to his Majesty on the late insult offered to his Person, on his passage to Parliament.

STEPH. LUSHINGTON,	GEORGE HIBBERT,
W. RAIKES,	D. GILES,
E. FORSTER,	GEORGE PETERS,
W. ROBINSON,	BEESTON LONG,
JOHN HENRY CAZENOVE,	P. J. THELLUSSON,
ALEX. AUBERT,	G. G. STONESTREET.

And on Thursday at the Court of Common Council,

Mr. Thomas Dornford moved an Address to his Majesty, congratulating his Majesty on his providential escape from the hands of a lawless banditti, on the 29th of October, 1795, on his passage to the House of Parliament.

Deputy Leekey seconded the motion.

Deputy Birch moved an amendment, by adding the words, " And to thank his Majesty for his most gracious intention of giving the fullest and speediest effect to a negociation for a general peace, on just and reasonable terms, whenever the order of things should arise in France, compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reasonable expec-

 tation

tation of security and permanency in a treaty to be concluded; and that in order to accelerate this desirable end, his Majesty may be assured of the loyalty and fidelity of the Citizens of London, in aiding the prosecution of the War with the utmost energy and vigour, until such a peace can be obtained."

Mr. Woodbridge in a short speech seconded the amendment.

Mr. Dixon said, the Court had already expressed those sentiments in their Address in January last, and therefore considered them as unnecessary now.

Several objections were made to the amendment.

Mr. Alderman Combe wished that the Address had gone no further than in regard to the late attack on the sacred person of the King; but to shew his attachment to the Royal Personage, he should give his assent to the proposition.

After several Members had given their opinions, the question was put and carried.

The Lord Mayor elect, Alderman Watson, Hammet, Sanderson, Glynn, Lushington, and Coombe; the Commoners Birch, Wooldridge, Kemble, Leekey, Syms, Thorpe, Dornford, Nuenberg, Brickwood, Sutherland, White, Powell, Parish, and Nichols, were appointed to draw up the Address: they withdrew, and having prepared it, it was read by the Recorder and agreed to; and the Sheriffs were desired to wait on his Majesty to know when they may wait upon him therewith.

The following is the ADDRESS presented on Friday:

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Humble Address of the LORD MAYOR, ALDERMEN, *and* COMMONERS *of the City of London, in Common Council assembled.*

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

We your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commoners of the City of London, in Common Council assembled, beg leave to approach your Royal Person with the most affectionate sentiments of veneration and respect, to express our horror and indignation at the most daring assault and flagitious outrage offered to your Majesty, in your Majesty's passage to and from Parliament, at the moment of your Majesty's exercising the sacred duties of the Crown, and fulfilling your part of our most excellent Constitution.

Gratefully as we enjoy every blessing derived to us, in common with our fellow free-born subjects, from your Majesty's mild and paternal Government, we are unable in adequate terms to express our concern, that a period has arrived when any person within your Majesty's dominions should be found so daringly wicked, as to hazard, by such atrocious violence, the safety of your Royal Person, and therein the happiness of a whole country.

It is therefore with the most profound sentiments of gratitude to the supreme Disposer of all events, that we have to congratulate your Majesty in your providential escape from such traitorous attacks, dangerous at once to the public tranquillity, and in violation of the glorious Constitution, of which your Majesty forms so important a part.

Permit

Permit us, Sire, to return your Majeſty our moſt grateful thanks, for your gracious intention to give the fulleſt and ſpeedieſt effect to a Negociation for a General Peace, on juſt and ſuitable terms, whenever an order of things ſhall ariſe in France, compatible with the tranquillity of other countries, and affording a reaſonable expectation of ſecurity and permanency in a Treaty to be concluded.

Convinced as your Majeſty's faithful and loyal Citizens of London are, that nothing will be ſo likely to bring about ſuch a Peace, as firm and vigorous meaſures in the proſecution of the War, we feel it not more our bounden duty than our ſteady determination to contribute every thing in our power to that deſirable end, and to ſupport your Majeſty's ſacred Perſon and Government inviolate from all your foreign and domeſtic enemies.

His Majeſty was pleaſed to receive the Corporation very graciouſly, and made the following anſwer :—

"I thank you for this recent proof of the uniform affection and attachment which has been ſhewn me by my faithful City of London; the perſuaſion that the ſentiments you have expreſſed on this occaſion are common with thoſe of the reſt of my people, leaves me only to regret, on my part, the outrage which has been committed againſt the laws and conſtitution, for the defence and maintenance of which you may always rely upon my utmoſt exertions.

"Your determination to contribute every thing in your power to ſupport the vigorous exertions I am making for the proſecution of the war, as affording me the moſt effectual means of enabling me to conclude a ſafe, honourable, and permanent peace, and your aſſurances to ſupport my Perſon and Government againſt all foreign and domeſtic enemies, cannot but be highly ſatisfactory to me."

His Majeſty was pleaſed to confer the honour of Knighthood on Sheriff Glode.

The Merchants and Bankers, at their Meeting on Friday, came to the following Reſolutions :

THAT it is the opinion of this Meeting, that a dutiful Addreſs be preſented to his Majeſty, to aſſure his Majeſty of the abhorrence they entertain of the late daring attack on his Majeſty's perſon, and of the principles which have tended to miſlead the minds of thoſe who were guilty of it.

The draft of an Addreſs was then read, and unanimouſly approved by the Meeting, who reſolved that the ſame be engroſſed, and left for ſignature at the London Tavern, until Wedneſday next, at twelve o'Clock.

Reſolved, That the following Gentlemen be a Committee to preſent the Addreſs :

Sir Richard Neave, Bart. Chairman.

Sir S. Lushington, Bart.	George Hibbert, Eſq.
W. Raikes, Eſq.	D. Giles, Eſq.
E. Forster, Eſq.	George Peters, Eſq.
W. Robinson, Eſq.	Beeston Long, Eſq.
John H. Cazenove, Eſq.	P. I. Thellusson, Eſq.
Alex. Aubert, Eſq.	G. G. Stonestreet, Eſq.

Addreſs

Addreſs of the LIGHT HORSE VOLUNTEERS *of the Cities of London and Weſtminſter, preſented to His* MAJESTY *by* CHARLES HERRIES, *Eſq. Lieutenant-Colonel, 4th Nov.* 1795.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

" WE, your Majeſty's faithful Subjects, the Light Horſe Volunteers of the Cities of London and Weſtminſter, who have been permitted to unite to the characters which we reſpectively hold in civil life, a military one, in defence of your Majeſty, and in ſupport of order and good government, cannot refrain from expreſſing our grief and indignation at the violence recently offered to your ſacred perſon, and our abhorrence of the principles by which it was inſtigated. We moſt humbly congratulate your Majeſty, and are thankful to Almighty God for the preſervation of a life, on which the ſafety and happineſs of theſe realms, and, in the preſent criſis, the welfare of all Europe materially depend.

" We cannot help conſidering this outrageous attempt on your Majeſty's ſacred perſon as an attack, not only on the perſon of our King, but, through him, upon the Conſtitution of our country; not only upon the Monarch on the Throne, but of the Monarchy itſelf. Your Majeſty may therefore rely that your ſubjects will ſtand forth in your defence, not only with all the zeal and attachment which your Majeſty's perſonal character and many virtues muſt inſpire, but alſo with all that energy and determination with which Britons will at all times ſtand forward in defence of the Conſtitution of their Country.

" It will always be our pride to take an active part in maintaining the laws which protect our fellow ſubjects, and in defending your Majeſty's life and dignity againſt the ſeditious and treaſonable combinations of thoſe, who, by inſidious pretexts, endeavour to delude your ſubjects into acts as deteſtable in themſelves, as they are unworthy of a brave and honourable people."

Dated at London, Nov. 3, 1795.

Signed by Order of the Corps,
THOMAS ROWCROFT,
Chairman of the General Meeting.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *Friday, Nov.* 6.

Lord GRENVILLE moved the Order of the Day, which was, that his Majeſty's Proclamations ſhould be read. This being done, he ſaid, that he conceived thoſe Proclamations to be the ground-work of the Bill which he propoſed that day to ſubmit to the conſideration of their Lordſhips, but ſaw no occaſion to enter into a detail of the meaſure, or to argue upon the ſeveral charges and proviſions of the Bill. The late violent attack upon the perſon of his Majeſty demanded ſome neceſſary meaſures for the prevention of a return of ſimilar abuſes, and that attack he ſuſpected to have been made in conſequence of the licentious proceedings which had of late been ſuffered without any notice or reſtriction. Indeed the treaſonable

treaſonable and ſeditious ſpeeches and writings, which had of late been ſo aſſiduouſly diſſeminated at public meetings, together with the number of libels otherwiſe circulated, were ſo general and notorious, as moſt particularly to call for the interference of Parliament. As one of his Majeſty's ſervants, therefore, or even as a Member of that Houſe, he looked upon it as a duty to remonſtrate againſt them, and endeavour to check their flagitious tendency. In doing this, however, he ſhould recur to the example of former periods, and whatever variations there might be in the Bill which he then offered to the attention of their Lordſhips from the precedents of other times, he could aſſure their Lordſhips that they would be found only to vary ſo far as the peculiar forms of the exiſting circumſtances and the temporary danger required. The precedents to which he referred were thoſe in the reign of Elizabeth, and at the commencement of the reign of Charles the Second; acts paſſed in approved times, and applied to circumſtances by no means diſſimilar from thoſe of the preſent times; and he doubted not but their Lordſhips would agree with him in the idea of the abſolute neceſſity for adopting ſuch meaſures before theſe treaſonable and ſeditious operations ſhall have conſpired and extended to ſuch extremities as to endanger the Monarchy, and even the life and ſafety of our Sovereign, and to ſubvert the peace and order of the Conſtitution of the country. On theſe grounds, he preſented a Bill entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," which being read a firſt time, he moved that it ſhould be printed, and the Lords be ſummoned for the ſecond reading on Tueſday next.

The Earl of LAUDERDALE ſaid, that when he firſt ſaw the Proclamation which had juſt been read, his mind was filled with an equal degree of ſurpriſe and anxiety, conſidering it to be a moſt extraordinary and unaccountable meaſure. He had gone home with heartfelt eaſe after the debate of the preceding evening, fully convinced that, from what had paſſed there, every idea of diſquiet, alarm, or danger, had been completely lulled by the declaration they had heard from the higheſt authority, and which tended to convince their Lordſhips and the country that one of the great objects of the war was completely fulfilled, and that all the dread and alarm which had any where exiſted, was quieted by the ſalutary effects of the Proclamation in 1792, and the ſubſequent meaſures which Miniſters had adopted. But how muſt his aſtoniſhment be increaſed now, when a bill is introduced from the very

ſame

ſame quarter, and grounded upon that Proclamation. From the whole tenour and principle he muſt contend that it was a direct contradiction to all they had heard from the high authority he had juſt alluded to. It appeared now, that it would be abſurd and prepoſterous to ſuppoſe that the former meaſures of Government have had the deſired effect, or that they had ſucceeded in obtaining one of the greateſt objects of the war. For now, after all they had done, they find themſelves obliged to come forward with a meaſure ten times ſtronger and more dangerous to the liberties of the country than they had dared to do, even at the moment of their greateſt and moſt avowed alarm. Though his ſurprize was very great on the appearance of the Proclamation, it was very much increaſed by the Bill which had been now read. By the conſtruction of it, a variety of new crimes and new treaſons were introduced into the criminal law of this country, and by new framing the words and phraſes to deſcribe thoſe crimes, the Bill, upon the very firſt bluſh of it, held out a total alteration of the exiſting laws reſpecting treaſon, and a moſt dangerous innovation upon the Conſtitution. The Noble Lord had boaſted that in framing this Bill, he had followed the wiſdom and example of our anceſtors, and copied from former precedents the proviſions it contained; perhaps he might have copied from former times;—but what were the times? Strange times indeed, and ſuch as never, he thought, would have been reſorted to, for example, in the preſent day, and of a complexion completely different from any one period ſince the Revolution down to the hour he was ſpeaking. It occurred to him as extraordinary, that ſo ſtrong a meaſure ſhould be propoſed by the Noble Lord, and offered to that Houſe, without ſome evidence being produced that it was neceſſary; however, there was no evidence of any ſort brought to prove that there was the leaſt ſhadow of ground to believe that the calamities ſtated, and the treaſon or ſedition complained of, did actually exiſt, nor could the Noble Lord prove that there was any thing like a ſpirit of diſloyalty prevalent in the country at this time. Thus, without the ſlighteſt foundation, a Bill was brought in, which if it paſſed into a law, would annihilate every liberty and privilege which Engliſhmen now poſſeſs. In this view he thought the words of the Proclamation itſelf were wide enough in their extent, and built the whole of its ſtrength and conſtruction, upon the notoriety of the events which it ſtated had taken place. Not content, however, with this latitude, it went farther, by ſtating future intention, without any thing like a fact or proof that could warrant ſuch an

anticipation of criminality. So much for the Proclamation. But the Bill itſelf, from hearing it once read, ſpoke in language too plain to be miſunderſtood in its object and extent, and led him to pronounce, that from the moment it paſſed into a law, every liberty and privilege of the ſubject was done away. No public meeting for any public purpoſe could be held, however legal, neceſſary, or uſeful ſuch meetings might be, under the preſent laws. No meeting could be held for conſidering grievances of any ſort, however oppreſſive they might be upon the people; nor for the repeal of any law which they feel as an hardſhip upon them. The noble Lord wiſhed them to think that liberty would ſtill remain, becauſe he had a clauſe reſerving their rights and liberties to Members of either Houſe of Parliament, but that very reſervation convinced him, and muſt prove the extent to which they mean to carry the law, by taking from all others that right and liberty which they now poſſeſs, and confining it to Members of Parliament only. Having then learned the wide extent to which they meant to carry this arbitrary meaſure, who is there who had even been accuſtomed to admire and extol the Britiſh Conſtitution, that could pronounce there now remained any thing enviable in the ſituation of thoſe who live under it? In the old Conſtitution of France there was nothing worſe, nothing more deſpotic nor more inconſiſtent with the freedom of Engliſhmen than this Bill went to create. The fact appeared to him to be, that Miniſters having involved the country in a ruinous and deſtructive war, they muſt have recourſe to extraordinary and unheard-of meaſures as the only means to carry on their mad and dangerous ſyſtem; a war entered into againſt the ſenſe of the people, and carried on at an expence ſo enormous that it was with much difficulty indeed that the poor could bear the preſſure of grievances which it had already occaſioned. Yet in the midſt of all their hardſhips, and with the miſerable pittance which the public extravagance of the Noble Lord and his colleagues had left them, he comes forward with a Bill at once to deprive them of the power of meeting to diſcuſs the grievances which he has heaped upon them, and of every degree of liberty which they now enjoy.

There was another moſt alarming circumſtance in this Bill, which was, that it was not brought in to check any ſpecified or immediate danger, but as a permanent alteration of the criminal law of the country, for it was to continue during the life of the King, and even afterward, which, in the mind of every thinking man, muſt make the whole meaſure ſtill more objectionable than

even the wording of the Bill was. Another queſtion naturally aroſe, who are thoſe Miniſters whom you are to truſt with this extraordinary acquiſition of executive power? Are they not men who have already in the moſt glaring manner ſtrained the application of the penal laws to its height, by the manner in which they have executed them in a great variety of inſtances? He daily heard with horror and ſurpriſe of the extraordinary tranſactions that occurred. Only the other day a cook-maid was brought up to a public-office, and being ſurpriſed upon what account, he was told of an anonymous letter that had been ſent to the private ſecretary of a Secretary of State, accuſing her maſter of treaſonable words and intentions, and deſcribing her to be proper and competent to give ſuch evidence as would bring him to puniſhment. She replied that the whole muſt be falſe, and expreſſed the greateſt aſtoniſhment that he ſhould be deſcribed as a diſloyal ſubject, whom ſhe had every reaſon to think was quite contrary. Being diſmiſſed of courſe, all that came from the Bench was, that the charge being groundleſs, it was a pity that the author of the letter could not be brought to puniſhment—a fine ſatisfaction for endeavouring to deprive a man of his character, upon a charge, the very ſuſpicion of his being guilty of which, muſt place him in the deteſtation of every one, and endanger every thing he valued in his profeſſion and ſituation of life. His Lordſhip reprobated this proceeding as moſt ſcandalous and tyrannical. He likewiſe adverted to ſome other perſons in confinement, who were brought up for bail, and were told from the Bench that they had yet received no inſtructions from Government reſpecting them. They might or might not give ſuch inſtructions to their magiſtrates, but the law of the land ought to inſtruct them very differently, and point out to them the enormity of ſuch conduct. The dangers and alarms which miniſters had created all along, he aſcribed to their own private ends or views, and not ariſing out of any circumſtances that could bear them out in the ſyſtem they had purſued, and under that idea, and from a review of their paſt conduct, he thought the danger to the country would be increaſed by putting any additional power in their hands. The preſent bill, in its eſſence, principles, and every view it could be taken, went to a total deſtruction of Britiſh liberty, and when it came to be compared in its future ſtages, as it would be, with thoſe old laws of times that had been held up as precedents, he was ſure it would gain nothing even by that compariſon. His Lordſhip concluded a very able and animated ſpeech, by pronouncing it to be one of the ſevereſt and moſt dangerous bills

bills againſt the rights and liberties of the people that had ever been introduced.

LORD GRENVILLE ſaid, that the latter part of the ſpeech of the Noble Earl called upon him to ſay a few words by way of anſwer. Indeed, had the noble Earl taken the trouble to compare the contents of the Bill now propoſed with the former laws upon the ſubject, he would have ſpared ſome of his obſervations, becauſe he would have ſeen they were unfounded. Upon this, however, he ſhould be very ſhort, as he ſhould have abundant opportunity of diſcuſſing the ſubject. The noble Earl ſaid, that Miniſters had made a ſingular contradiction. He then referred to the argument of the noble Lord from the Woolſack, and ſeemed to contend that it was there aſſerted, that all diſcontent and deſign againſt the government of this country was done away; that all ſeditious practices were at an end. This was not the ſpirit or the meaning of his noble Friend on the Woolſack. The ſpirit of what he had ſaid was this, that by the firmneſs of Parliament in oppoſing principles which had been ſupported by the arms of France, and which had been induſtriouſly propagated in this country, we were yet able to debate in the Houſe of Lords, and ſtill poſſeſſed of the power of arguing on the advantages of the Britiſh Conſtitution. This was an inaccuracy of the Noble Earl; neither was it true that Miniſters had at any period aſſerted, there was a general ſpirit of diſloyalty or diſaffection in the people of this country. To whom did the Noble Earl impute that aſſertion?—Who had he heard make uſe of it?—When did he hear it? So far was he from thinking there was any foundation for accuſing the maſs of the people of this country of diſaffection to the Government, that he gloried in ſaying there was a general and almoſt univerſal ſpirit of loyalty in this country. But that there were ſome men, and a few of them men of information and talents, who were deſirous of working on the minds of others; and, he was ſorry to ſay, they had ſo far prevailed as to make ſome converts among the thoughtleſs and the ignorant. Enough were infected with falſe and deluſive notions concerning our Conſtitution, and even with the ſpirit of treaſon, to make it highly neceſſary for Parliament to interfere. They ſhould not now, therefore, ſhrink from the danger, but come boldly forward to defend the Rights, the Liberties, the Law, and the Conſtitution of their country.

The Noble Earl then had proceeded to aſſert that Miniſters had involved the country in a war, and are now driven to this expedient for carrying it on. Again and again had the Noble Earl made

charges

charges of this kind againſt his Majeſty's miniſters; again and again had that been contradicted, and as often as the charge ſhould be made, ſhould he repeat, that his Majeſty's miniſters had not brought on this war. Their Lordſhips were in poſſeſſion of ſufficient information upon that ſubject, and they had repeatedly decided upon it. They, by their votes, had already declared, that his Majeſty's miniſters did not involve the country in this war. Miniſters had conducted the war according to the beſt of their abilities, and he reflected with pleaſure on the ſituation in which we now ſtood, when compared with the beginning. He deſired their Lordſhips to compare our ſituation, as it now ſtands, with what it might have been if they had ſuffered the Conſtitution to be ſubverted by thoſe who had that in view, and who called to their aid the menaces of France.—The Noble Earl might depend upon it, he was perfectly ready to debate this queſtion with him, and he might be aſſured, he ſhould hear it often repeated, that miniſters had not involved this country in a war.

With reſpect to the proviſions of the Bill, when they came to be argued, he ſhould prove his aſſertions on the neceſſity of the meaſure. He ſhould prove to the ſatisfaction of their Lordſhips, that it did not, in the ſmalleſt degree, interfere with the right of the people to meet in legal and peaceable aſſemblies; (Lord Lauderdale called out, *hear! hear!*) Lord Grenville repeated it, and aſſerted, that the law which was propoſed to be enacted by this Bill, had for many years been the law of this country. He did not know there was any other point in the ſpeech of the Noble Earl which required to be anſwered. Whenever he ſtated his objections to the Bill, he ſhould meet theſe objections, and undertake to anſwer them. But he muſt be allowed to add, he was confident, that ſo far was this Bill from being an offence to the people of this country, that it was a meaſure for their protection. None could be made to ſuffer by it, except thoſe who knew their conduct and intentions were wicked. It was nothing but a Bill to prevent treaſon.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD ſaid, that in the preſent ſtage of the buſineſs, he did not mean to enter at large into the diſcuſſion of the Bill. From its general tendency, however, he had no heſitation to ſay, that he would embrace a future opportunity to expreſs the ſentiments of diſapprobation which he entertained. He was convinced, that while it was yet in their power to aſſemble, the people of this country would meet, and diſplay a ſenſe of this attack aimed at their liberties, ſo marked and deciſive, as would induce

their Lordſhips to abandon the deſign of carrying forward the Bill. At preſent he would wiſh his agreeing to the printing of the Bill, not to be underſtood as implying any aſſent to its principle.

Earl of Radnor was not ſure, that in the remarks he had to offer, he might not tread on too delicate ground. He would ſeriouſly recommend to the attention of Government the ſtatute of Edward III. which was the foundation of the laws of treaſon in this country. Doubts had ariſen in the interpretation of it, as if it gave encouragement to what was known by the name of Conſtructive Treaſon. He believed that the ſtatute alluded to extended to nothing but direct attacks upon the ſafety of his Majeſty. Adverting to the recent State proſecutions, he obſerved, that, acting as a juryman, and upon Chief Juſtice Eyre's addreſs to the jury, he would have acquitted the defendants, although every article in the charge had been brought home to them. His Lordſhip ſaid, he might poſſibly be thought an odd man, but ſo far from being afraid to conſtitute new treaſons, he rather wiſhed to do ſo than not. If it were thought that certain offences not in the purview of the act, 25 Edward III. ought to be conſidered and puniſhed as High Treaſon, why not make them High Treaſon at once, and enact that they were ſo? By ſo doing, men would be taught to take warning, to underſtand what crimes they were committing, and what puniſhment they were incurring, and to know the extent of their danger; they would conſequently feel the neceſſity in point of prudence, of conducting themſelves accordingly. The Earl obſerved, that the Judges were directed, if they found any doubt in a caſe tried under the ſtatute of Treaſons, to apply to Parliament for advice and aſſiſtance, but that practice, their Lordſhips knew, was grown into diſuſe; and therefore it was the more neceſſary to make the law of treaſons as definite, as ſimple, and as eaſy to be comprehended as poſſible. Having treated theſe topicks conſtitutionally, his Lordſhip ſat down.

Earl Hopetoun was extremely anxious that the meaſure now propoſed by the Noble Lord ſhould be diſcuſſed with calmneſs and moderation. He believed that the language employed by a Noble Lord (Lauderdale) was not meant to excite or diffuſe any dangerous alarms, but aroſe merely from a natural warmth of temper. Such expreſſions, however, he thought ſhould be avoided.

Lord Lauderdale ſaid, that he wiſhed, not only the Noble Lord who had juſt ſat down, but the Houſe, and even the Public, ſhould be undeceived with regard to the conſtruction put upon the language he employed. He certainly deprecated the idea of exciting

ing any ferment in the minds of the people; but he conſidered the expreſſions alluded to as the feebleſt which his judgment could have ſelected, and by no means dictated by the heat of temper, or the ardour of debate. He would certainly employ ſtill ſtronger terms of reprobation, when the Bill was printed and came to be diſcuſſed. He roſe alſo to obſerve, in reply to what had fallen from the Noble Secretary of State, that it clearly appeared from the Noble Lord's own declaration of his belief in the univerſal loyalty of the inhabitants of this country, that by the meaſure, for which the conduct of only a handful of men furniſhed the pretence, the whole people of England were to be puniſhed in the abridgment of their liberties.

Lord Grenville ſaid he ſhould reſerve himſelf for the future ſtages of the Bill.

The queſtion was then put, That the Bill be printed. Ordered.

COPY OF A BILL,

INTITULED

An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts.

WE, your Majeſty's moſt dutiful and loyal ſubjects, the Lords ſpiritual and temporal, and Commons of Great Britain, in this preſent Parliament aſſembled, duly conſidering the daring outrages offered to your Majeſty's moſt ſacred perſon, in your paſſage to and from your Parliament, at the opening of the preſent ſeſſion, and alſo the continued attempts of wicked and evil diſpoſed perſons, to diſturb the tranquillity of this your Majeſty's kingdom, particularly by the multitude of ſeditious pamphlets and ſpeeches daily printed, publiſhed, and diſperſed, with unremitting induſtry, and with a tranſcendent boldneſs, in contempt of your Majeſty's royal perſon and dignity, and tending to the overthrow of the laws, government, and happy conſtitution of theſe realms, have judged that it is become neceſſary to provide a further remedy againſt all ſuch treaſonable and ſeditious practices and attempts: we, therefore, calling to mind the good and wholeſome proviſions which have at different times been made by the wiſdom of Parliament for the averting ſuch dangers, and more eſpecially for the ſecurity and preſervation of the perſons of the Sovereigns of theſe realms,

Do moſt humbly beſeech your Majeſty,

That it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's Moſt Excellent Majeſty, by and with the advice and conſent of the Lords ſpiritual and temporal, and Commons, in this preſent Parliament aſſembled, and by the authority of the ſame, That if any perſon or perſons whatſoever, after the day of in the year during the natural life of our moſt gracious Sovereign Lord the King, (whom Almighty God preſerve and bleſs with a long and proſperous reign), and until the end of the next

next Seſſion of Parliament, after a demiſe of the Crown, ſhall, within the realm or without, compaſs, imagine, invent, deviſe, or intend, death or deſtruction, or any bodily harm tending to death or deſtruction, maim or wounding, impriſonment or reſtraint of the perſon of the ſame our Sovereign Lord the King, his heirs and ſucceſſors, or to deprive or depoſe him or them from the ſtyle, honour, or kingly name of the imperial Crown of this realm, or of any other of his Majeſty's dominions or countries, or to levy war againſt his Majeſty, his heirs and ſucceſſors within this realm or without; or to move or ſtir any foreigner or ſtranger with force to invade this realm, or any other his Majeſty's dominions or countries, being under the obeiſance of his Majeſty, his heirs and ſucceſſors; and ſuch compaſſings, imaginations, inventions, devices, or intentions, or any of them, ſhall expreſs, utter, or declare, by any printing, writing, preaching, or malicious and adviſed ſpeaking, being legally convicted thereof, upon the oaths of two lawful and credible witneſſes, upon trial, or otherwiſe convicted or attainted by due courſe of law, then every ſuch perſon or perſons ſo as aforeſaid offending, ſhall be deemed, declared, and adjudged to be a traitor and traitors, and ſhall ſuffer pains of death, and alſo loſe and forfeit as in caſes of High Treaſon.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That if any perſon or perſons within that part of Great Britain called England, at any time from and after the   day of   in the year   during his Majeſty's life, and until the end of the next Seſſion of Parliament after the demiſe of the Crown, ſhall maliciouſly and adviſedly, by writing, printing, preaching, or other ſpeaking, expreſs, publiſh, utter, or declare any words, ſentences, or other thing or things, to incite or ſtir up the people to hatred or diſlike of the perſon of his Majeſty, his heirs or ſucceſſors, or the eſtabliſhed government and conſtitution of this realm, then every ſuch perſon and perſons, being thereof legally convicted, ſhall be liable to ſuch puniſhment as may by law be inflicted in caſes of high miſdemeanors; and if any perſon or perſons ſhall, after being ſo convicted, offend a ſecond time, and be thereupon convicted, ſuch perſon or perſons ſhall, on ſuch ſecond conviction, be adjudged to be tranſported for ſeven years, to ſuch place as ſhall be appointed by his Majeſty for the tranſportation of offenders.

Provided always, That no perſon be proſecuted by virtue of this Act, for any of the offences in this act mentioned (other than ſuch as are made and declared to be High Treaſon), unleſs it be by order of the King's Majeſty, his heirs or ſucceſſors, under his or their ſign manual, or by order of the council table of his Majeſty, his heirs and ſucceſſors, directed unto the Attorney-general for the time being, or to ſome other of the counſel learned to his Majeſty, his heirs and ſucceſſors, for the time being; nor ſhall any perſon or perſons, by virtue of this preſent act, incur any of the penalties herein before mentioned, unleſs he or they be proſecuted within   months next after the offence committed, and the proſecution brought to trial within the ſame term, aſſize, or ſeſſion, or that which next enſue after filing the information, or the indictment being found, unleſs the Court in which the ſame is depending ſhall, on ſpecial ground ſtated by motion in open court, think fit to enlarge the time for the trial thereof, or unleſs the defendant ſhall be proſecuted to an outlawry.

Pro-

Provided always, and be it enacted, That no perfon or perfons fhall be indicted, arraigned, condemned, convicted, or attainted, for any of the treafons or offences aforefaid, unlefs the fame offender or offenders be thereof accufed by the teftimony of two lawful aad credible witneffes, upon oath; which witneffes, at the time of the faid offender or offenders arraignment, fhall be brought in perfon before him or them, face to face, and fhall openly avow and maintain, upon oath, what they have to fay againft him or them concerning the treafon or offences contained in the fame Indictment, unlefs the party or parties arraigned fhall willingly, and without violence, confefs the fame.

Provided likewife, and be it enacted, That this Act, or any thing therein contained, fhall not extend to deprive either Houfes of Parliament, or any of their members, of their juft ancient freedom and privilege of debating any matters of bufinefs which fhall be propounded and debated in either of the faid Houfes, or at any conferences or committees of both or either of the faid Houfes of Parliament, or touching the repeal or alteration of any old, or preparing any new laws, or the redreffing any public grievance: but the faid members of either of the faid Houfes, and the affiftants of the Houfe of Peers, and every of them, fhall have the fame freedom of fpeech, and all other privileges whatfoever, as they had before the making of this Act; any thing in this Act to the contrary thereof in any wife notwithftanding.

Provided always, and be it further enacted, that all and every perfon or perfons that fhall at any time be accufed, or indicted, or profecuted, for any offence made or declared to be Treafon by this Act, fhall be intitled to the benefit of the Act of Parliament, made in the feventh year of his late Majefty King William the Third, intituled, "An Act for regulating of "Trials in cafes of Treafon, and Mifprifion of Treafon;" and alfo to the provifions made by another Act of Parliament, paffed in the feventh year of her late Majefty Queen Anne, intituled, "An Act for improving the "Union of the Two Kingdoms."

Provided alfo, and be it enacted, That nothing in this Act contained fhall extend, or be conftrued to extend, to prevent or affect any profecution by information or indictment at the common law, for any offence within the provifions of this Act, other than the offences hereby declared to be High Treafon, unlefs the party fhall have been firft profecuted under this Act.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

London Corresponding Society.

Copy of a Circular Letter to all the Patriotic Societies in Great Britain.

Citizens, *Committee Room, Nov. 7, 1795.*

ERE this will reach you, you will no doubt have acquired a general knowledge of the nature and tendency of the Bill now before the Houfe of Lords, and we haften to give you a defcription of the ftate of the public mind in London. Apprehending that every artifice of mifreprefentation will be ufed in order to overawe the country, you may reft affured the Bill will meet with the moft vigorous and determined oppofition, from every defcription of men who have ever profeffed in any degree whatever an attachment to the caufe of liberty: it has already produced in London a union which promifes the moft beneficial effects. All thofe diftinctions which were derived from difference of opinion on the neceffary degree of

 Reform;

Reform; all perſonalities; in ſhort, every conſideration whatever, except the neceſſity of ſtopping its progreſs and baffling its effects, are now proſtrated.

Long has it been taught by every political philoſopher, that the government of a free country is the creature of the people. It will for ever do honour to our anceſtors, that until the preſent age, they were more active than any other nation, in propagating this doctrine; but in oppoſition to the voice of reaſon, it has conſtantly happened, that by much the greateſt part of the world has groaned under the galling yoke of depotiſm; and it has been the uniform practice of tyrants, and their miniſters, to ſpeak and act as if they conſidered the people to be the creature of government.

The conſtitution of our country has been, for many ages, a mixture of Saxon Liberty and Norman Slavery; and, as theſe oppoſite principles have been, at different times, ſupported with different degrees of ſucceſs, the people have been treated, at one time as freemen, at another as ſlaves; but the point is now at iſſue, which of theſe principles ſhall be permanently eſtabliſhed under the name of law.

Happy ſhould we be, could we put the following queſtions to every individual of our fellow countrymen. Will you conſent that the political improvement of five centuries be at one ſtroke annihilated, and that our laws and conſtitution ſhall relapſe into that ſtate of barbarous ambiguity—that ſyſtem of conſtructive treaſon, which prevailed in the tyrannical reign of Edward the Second, of which, in the preamble of the *thirty-firſt* of Edward the Third, it is juſtly ſaid, that no man's life was ſafe, becauſe no man knew what was legal, and what was illegal? Are you willing to grant to that government, whoſe meaſures have avowedly brought you to the brink of famine, the power of telling you when you *may* meet? When you *ſhall ſhun* each other? When you *may* ſpeak, when you *muſt* be ſilent? What you *may* hear? What you *may* read? In ſhort, will you conſent to uſe or diffuſe at *their* diſcretion every means of intellectual improvement? We have determined to hold a General Meeting next Thurſday, and we requeſt you to uſe every means by which you can awaken your neighbours to a juſt ſenſe of the dangers attending the preſent Bill.

Signed in the Name, and by Order of the London Correſponding Society.

JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary.
ALEX. GALLOWAY, Aſſiſtant Secretary.

P. S. We are ſending a copy of this letter to each of our Correſpondents; we mean to offer one to every patriotic Newſpaper in London; and we wiſh you to co-operate with us, in giving it every poſſible degree of publicity.

TO

London Corresponding Society.

TO THE BRITISH NATION.

The Reply of the London Corresponding Society *to the Calumnies propagated by perfons in High Authority, for the purpofe of furnifhing pretences for the pending Convention Bill.*

PERHAPS nothing has a greater tendency to inflame the irritation of the public mind, and deftroy entirely that confidence of a people in the juftice and wifdom of their government, without which no authority can be refpected—no conftitution fecure—than the practice fo frequently appealed to by factious and ufurping Minifters, of charging every accidental intemperance—every unpremeditated outrage (from what quarter foever it may arife) upon thofe, who from their zeal in the caufe of human liberty and happinefs, have the boldnefs to expofe their defigns, and counteract their meafures.

Artifices fo bafe and ungenerous are fometimes fo far fuccefsful, as to delude a confiderable portion of the people, and to enable a Minifter to carry into effect the arbitrary and tyrannical meafures, which, without the affiftance of fuch expedients, he might never have had the courage to bring forward. But the public mind cannot be long abufed by delufions fupported only by the vague and unfounded affertions of a faction however powerful; the people, thus defrauded of their liberties, cannot long remain infenfible of their folly; and their fury and indignation at the lofs they have fuftained, is naturally encreafed by the remembrance of the impofition that has been put upon them, and the infult that has been offered to their underftandings.

To unmafk fuch delufions, therefore, and refute fuch groundlefs calumnies, ere it be too late, is one of the moft folemn duties which the real friends of peace and order can be called upon to fulfil; and to neglect this folemn duty were a crime of the higheft magnitude, at once againft the Government and the People.

Of this violation of duty we might juftly be charged, if, overawed by the power and political confequence of our calumniators, we neglect to feize an early opportunity of rebutting the groundlefs falfehoods that have been infidioufly directed againft us, by broad infinuations, at leaft, in the late Proclamation, and by the direct affertions of perfons in the higher pofts of confidence and power. Nay, when we confider the audacious attack made upon the liberties and conftitution of the country, by the Bill now pending in the Houfe of Lords, and as a foundation for which thefe calumnies have been advanced, we cannot but conceive that filence upon the prefent fubject would be in reality one of thofe acts of conftructive treafon, which it is the apparent intention of this Bill once more to naturalize among us. It would be, in fact, joining in the confpiracy againft the Conftitution, eftablifhed at the Revolution, in 1688, and by virtue of which the Houfe of Brunfwick was feated on the Britifh Throne.

The London Correfponding Society has not been in the habit of being abafhed by authoritative calumny, or daunted by illegal perfecution. With the

the fury of these it has always had to contend from its first institution to the present hour, and the firmness with which it has resisted reiterated shocks, and the judicial detection which the slanderous abuse of its accusers experienced on a late occasion, might naturally have been expected to have furnished some security against the repetition of malicious and unfounded charges, directed apparently against this association in particular, but levelled in reality against the yet unsubverted liberties of the country.

But these hopes, however rational, have been disappointed, as has indeed every hope which the friends of liberty and humanity have successively entertained from the present administration. Calumnious forgery, the common war-hoop of persecution and inquisitorial usurpation, is again appealed to, and the tumultuary excesses of an aggrieved and uninformed populace (aggravated by the hired agents of those who have a secret interest in the outrages which the friends of liberty and reason cannot but deplore) are boldly and flagitiously charged upon a society, the regularity and good order of whose proceedings have ever been conspicuous to all who have attended their meetings; and whose professed and real object (for they are neither ministers nor courtiers, and their professions and intentions are the same) is to preserve tranquillity, by disseminating information, and to promote the cause of liberty, by a firm and temperate exposition of the invasions of tyrannical corruption, and the consequent miseries of an oppressed and overburthened people.

Comparing together, as we do, our intentions and conduct with the base calumnies that are heaped upon us—conscious of the purity and legality of our intentions, and comparing the regularity of our conduct with the base assertions of our enemies, we cannot but mix some indignation with our surprize, while we call aloud with the the conscious pride of injured innocence upon our accusers for the PROOFS of that criminal accusation which they have so boldly made; at the same time, we take the liberty of reminding those accusers, that if they have no such proofs to bring forward (which we know they cannot have, for proofs and falsehoods are antidotes which can never be reconciled), the public mind may for a while be startled by the effrontery of their assertions; but that indignation and contempt inevitably succeed as soon as the first torpor has subsided. We remind them, also, that there is no magic in authority, by which in the eyes of reflecting men, unsupported assertion can be converted into the semblance of fact; yet, that false accusations may sometimes be so flagitious, and the views with which they are advanced so obvious and profligate, as to bring the authority that endeavours to support them into absolute discredit with every liberal and candid mind.

Considering, therefore, that the accusation against us is totally unsupported by any evidence, it is sufficient for us to DENY, as positively as our accusers have affirmed, that there was any sort of connection between the Meeting at Copenhagen House, and the illegal and tumultuary proceedings of the first day of the present Session of Parliament. And when the CONVENIENT MEMORY and TRIED VERACITY of our accusers is remembered, we trust we may call with confidence upon the public, to pay as much credit to our denial, as to their affirmation.

But we stop not here. We solemnly appeal to the publicity and known regularity of all the proceedings of our very numerous Society—we appeal to those solemn invocations in behalf of peace and good order, which we

repeatedly made at the Meeting so unjustly calumniated; and the strong arguments that were elaborately enforced, to shew the necessity of observing the most strict legality in our pursuit of Parliamentary Reform, and to demonstrate that all tumult and violence were, in reality, favourable only to the views and objects of the Minister, whom we firmly believed (and it is now evident, as the sun at noon, that our belief was well founded), only wanted the pretences, which such events might furnish, to make fresh invasion upon our liberties, and establish despotism on the ruin of popular association.

We appeal also to the miseries of the country, and the ruin in which it is involved by this war of unparalleled fury and devastation; and call upon the candid and impartial of every party seriously to answer, whether the starving wretchedness of the great mass of the people does not in reality furnish a more easy and obvious solution of the event so universally deplored, than the stale pretence that reason and truth are the promoters of tumult, and falsehood and ignorance the only preservatives of the public peace? We appeal also to the experience of past history in support of our assertion, that tumult and insurrection (always frequent in seasons of great national calamity) have uniformly commenced not among those who have associated for the purposes of enquiry, but from those who are both too miserable and too ignorant to appeal to so rational a mode of conduct. And finally, we call upon Ministers to peruse with attention the Essay of the great Lord Bacon, upon the Causes of Seditions and Troubles, and to treasure in their minds the important admonition of that enlightened Politician and Philosopher—That, "of all Rebellions, those of the Belly are the worst."

To conclude, The London Corresponding Society, in the most solemn and public manner, disavow, disclaim, and reprobate the attack said to have been made on the person of the Chief Magistrate; and they subjoin it as their constant, and YET unshaken maxim, that the only way to promote the cause of Liberty and Human Happiness is, to respect the Laws and Constituted Authorities of their country, at the same time that they persevere in the most undaunted resolution of DEMANDING the restoration of their Rights—the Reform of growing Abuses.

By Order of the General Committee,
J. BINNS, Chairman of the Meeting
at Copenhagen-House.
J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

TUESDAY, *Nov.* 10.

Meetings were advertised to be held, of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and other inhabitants of the county of Surry, at Epsom, on Monday the 16th, to consider of an Address to his Majesty on his late providential escape.

And of the electors and other inhabitants of the borough of Southwark, and parts adjacent, at the Town Hall, St. Margaret's Hill, on Wednesday the 11th, for the same purpose.

And, same day, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Whig Club was called, to take into consideration the "Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts."

And

And of "All Bookſellers, Printers, and others connected with the Preſs, at the Large Rooms, No. 2, Beaufort-Buildings, Strand, to conſider the effects of the preſent alarming Bill, now pending in Parliament, which, in its conſequence will annihilate the Liberty of the Preſs, and bring inevitable ruin upon the Trade."

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *Tueſday, Nov.* 10.

DUKE OF PORTLAND preſented a Petition to the Houſe from the City of Bath, ſigned by a great number of Perſons of that city, ſtating their abhorrence of the outrages and inſults committed againſt his Majeſty's perſon and the dignity of Parliament, upon the firſt day of the Seſſion, and praying that their Lordſhips would take ſuch ſteps as might tend moſt ſpeedily and effectually to bring the offenders to puniſhment, and prevent the commiſſion of ſimilar crimes in future, which was read at the table.

LORD GRENVILLE moved the Order of the Day. He ſaid he roſe purſuant to the notice he had given on a former occaſion, to move the ſecond reading of the Bill to protect his Majeſty's perſon and the Conſtitution of the country from ſimilar attacks with thoſe which had ſo recently been made upon both. He had already ſtated the grounds upon which this Bill was brought in, and the circumſtances were ſo notorious, that when all the facts were collected, he believed there could be no man in or out of that Houſe who did not ſee the neceſſity for this meaſure, and therefore he had the leſs to ſay upon this ſtage of the Bill. The fact ſet forth in the preamble was undeniable, a body of proof upon that head was already before their Lordſhips. In addition to that evidence they had his Majeſty's Proclamation, grounded upon enquiry and examination. That ſuch a meeting had been held in the fields, but three days previous to the meeting of Parliament, no man could heſitate to believe: no man likewiſe could doubt for a ſingle moment that the daring outrage committed on the perſon of the Sovereign, and in it a moſt unprecedented inſult on the dignity and freedom of Parliament, followed from the ſeditious ſpeeches, and libellous and treaſonable papers delivered and circulated at that meeting. The proviſions the Bill contained were founded upon the precedents of former times, and differed in no way from the acts which had been adopted as prudent and wiſe by their anceſtors; there might be a few variations, but theſe were regulated by the difference of circumſtances. As theſe bills had been thought the moſt proper for the times in which they were paſſed, ſo the preſent only varied from them in being the moſt proper for the preſent times. The Bill might be divided into two parts: the firſt

for

for the ſafety and protection of his Majeſty's Perſon, the other for the puniſhment of treaſonable crimes againſt the State. On the firſt he did not expect there would be any difference of opinion; and on the ſecond, he aſſerted that there were no puniſhments created for crimes that were not already acknowledged to be ſo by the exiſting laws, excepting that it was intended by the preſent Bill to include treaſonable publications and diſcourſe, as equally criminal and dangerous with the acts ſtated to be treaſon by the laws now in force. To deviſe or compaſs the King's death was already treaſon, and the whole of that part of the Bill was grounded upon the ſolemn opinions of the beſt lawyers in this country.—There could not be a doubt but ſuch compaſſing or conſpiring againſt the King's perſon and government as was ſpecified in the Bill, amounted to that degree of guilt which called for the moſt ſevere puniſhment, whether it amounted to levying civil war againſt the King, or encouraging foreign enemies, or by writing, printing, publiſhing, or even ſpeaking, the effect of the crime was the ſame, and the puniſhment ought to be ſo likewiſe. The proviſions of the Bill had been made upon the ſame principles as the Acts of Queen Elizabeth and Charles II. to which he had alluded on a former night, and were in fact as much ſimilar as the circumſtances of the preſent times would admit; and it having been found that difficulties ſometimes aroſe in the conſtruction of the Acts now in force, it was intended by the variations from them in this Bill, to aſcertain preciſely the meaning which was to be given to the whole of the treaſon laws. One alteration he meant to move when the Bill came into the Committee; it was to omit the words *malicious and adviſed ſpeaking*, and that being done, there would remain nothing in the Bill which was not already acknowledged by the exiſting laws to be treaſon. With regard to the clauſe reſpecting ſedition, it does not interfere with the preſent laws, nor prohibit any acts or meetings which are now legal, but in ſome caſes provides a more adequate puniſhment for the degree of crime than the exiſting laws admit of, it having in many inſtances been found that though the crime was ſufficiently proved, the law did not point out any adequate puniſhment. As to the remaining proviſions of the Bill, they were all of a nature favourable to the perſons who might be accuſed; and having taken this general review of the Bill, he would reſerve what he had further to ſay, until he heard what poſſible objections could be made to it; and, he confeſſed, he ſhould moſt anxiouſly liſten, and like to hear what grounds thoſe Noble Lords had to go upon, who had taken up this buſineſs in ſo high a tone upon its introduction into

into the Houfe. He then moved, " That the Bill be now read a fecond time."

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD rofe, but was interrupted by the Clerk proceeding to read the Bill ; when

LORD THURLOW, faid, that the words, " that this Bill be read a fecond time" had certainly been faid from the woolfack, which had happened accidentally a thoufand times, but when any Noble Lord wifhed, in that ftage, to interfere, and deliver his fentiments, the rigid punctilio of order was ufually difpenfed with. In point of form, the Noble Duke fhould proceed, as the Bill could not be read a fecond time till the queftion was put from the Woolfack.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD faid, that, for various reafons it was not his intention to follow the Noble Lord much into the detail of the Bill before them, in its prefent ftage, though, he owned, he was very much aftonifhed at the manner in which the Noble Lord had prefaced his motion for the fecond reading of it. When the Noble Secretary of State firft propofed this Bill, he referved himfelf till a future period, when he promifed to give the Houfe full fatisfaction refpecting his motives for bringing it in, and the neceffity that exifted for fo ftrong a meafure ; but to-day the time was come when this promifed explanation might reafonably be expected, yet the Noble Lord had contented himfelf with the round affertion—That no Lord of Parliament, or man out of it, could doubt the neceffity of the meafure, and calling upon them for their immediate acquiefcence. It did not become him to ftate what were merely his own opinions upon that neceffity ; but certainly it became the duty, and was confiftent with the dignity of Parliament, to have before them fome fort of evidence upon which that neceffity could be founded, and of which they now poffeffed no materials whatever to guide their opinions. On the firft point there could be no difference of opinion, as far as it related to the glaring and flagitious outrage committed againft the Sovereign : every man in and out of that Houfe muft reprobate fuch crimes, and earneftly wifh to fee them punifhed in an adequate and exemplary manner ; at the fame time he muft add, that he faw nothing in the Bill that tended in the leaft to fecure or protect his Majefty's perfon more than what the exifting laws provided for. The fecond part of the Bill was founded upon the Proclamation againft meetings which had been held. Now, he would fubmit to the Houfe, Whether it was not inconfiftent with their dignity to proceed to fo ferious and folemn an act as the introduction of this extraordinary and dangerous Bill, without having before them any proof of any fort, that the proceedings of thofe meetings had ren-

dered ſuch a ſtrong meaſure neceſſary. When upon a former occaſion, the ſame Miniſter had thought it proper to adopt a very ſtrong meaſure (the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act), they did not dare to propoſe it, without previouſly going into a minute enquiry, by appointing a Select Committee, who reported to the Houſe a maſs of evidence which gave their proceedings, at leaſt, the appearance of deliberation; whereas, in the preſent inſtance, they ſeemed to diſregard all idea of deliberation, enquiry or evidence; and merely becauſe an abominable outrage had been committed on the firſt day of the Seſſion, they were to be ſatisfied that ſuch dangerous conſequences were likely to follow, that nothing but this ſtrongeſt of meaſures, and moſt deſtructive of Britiſh liberty, could poſſibly prevent. It was not enough that the Noble Lord ſhould declare that HE was ſatisfied on this point; PARLIAMENT ought to know the neceſſity of the meaſure before they adopted it. If any of the perſons guilty of the outrage he had alluded to were to be apprehended, and it ſhould be found that there was no law in the country by which they could be adequately puniſhed, a new law ought to made for that purpoſe, that thoſe who afterwards might attempt any thing ſimilar ſhould not eſcape juſtice; but in the preſent Bill there was nothing even of this ſort, not one clauſe that went to render the King's perſon more ſafe, nor the puniſhment of ſuch traitors greater than it was under the laws now in force. He wiſhed the Noble Secretary of State would explain the law as far as it regards the King's life, being any ways defective, or wherein this Bill was likely to amend it.

With regard to the times which the Noble Lord had choſen to take his precedents from, he, for one, muſt expreſs his aſtoniſhment. He never thought that the Noble Lord would have ſo far forgotten what he and the nation owed to thoſe who brought about the Revolution, as to ſpeak of the reigns of Elizabeth and Charles II. as models for example, or furniſhing precedents for Government to act upon in the preſent day. What would the opinions of thoſe great men be who aſſiſted in the driving from the throne a family, by whoſe intrigues the religion and government of the country was ſo long diſtracted by every ſpecies of diſaſter and ruin, to make room too for that illuſtrious line which had ſince filled it with ſo much happineſs and proſperity to the nation, were they to look up now and hear the Noble Lord taking his precedents from the times he had mentioned? But the Noble Lord ought to reflect on the events that followed thoſe precedents, and ſurely they will furniſh him with nothing that he could wiſh to anticipate from this meaſure.—In Queen Elizabeth's time, thoſe laws were

were chiefly directed against bulls issued by the Pope, and when the country was in a very distracted state, both from foreign and domestic foes; and in Charles the Second's reign, these measures were adopted when he was just restored after a twenty year's absence, and when the minds of men all over the country had been alienated from their loyalty and obedience to their Sovereign, and when such laws might be absolutely necessary for his protection. But how could a comparison be drawn between such times and the present? Was not the situation of his Majesty and that of the county directly the reverse? And even allowing that some Bill was necessary for the greater protection of his Majesty, there was nothing in this Bill that could mean that. If it was a Bill fit to be passed at all for that purpose, it ought to be a permanent Act, and one of the standing laws of the country. So much he thought it his duty to state in this stage; but as the Noble Lord had declined going into the detail of the Bill farther, until it went into the Committee, he would do the same, in the mean time expressing his abhorrence of the principle of the Bill.

The Earl of Lauderdale said, that considering the great magnitude and importance of the question, as well as the manner in which the Noble Lord had pledged himself on a former night, when he reserved his opinions for future discussion, he did expect that some argument or reasoning would have been offered in this stage of the Bill that might tend to convince the House of the necessity of such an extraordinary measure; but still the Noble Lord had left the question as naked as when he first introduced it, contenting himself, as the noble Duke had remarked, with the round assertion that the measure was grounded on a necessity so notorious that the world at large knew and acknowledged it, without going into any examination of facts, or adducing any proof that could at all support the proposition he had brought forward. He adverted to the Proclamation and the Petition presented by a Noble Duke, both which held out a positive connection between the meeting of the Corresponding Society, and the outrages which took place on the first day of the Session. These were insinuations that had been held out elsewhere, but no shadow of evidence had been offered to prove the connection between that society and the insults offered to his Majesty, excepting that the one happened about three days before the other took place. He could not suppose that the Noble Lord's mind was sufficiently strong on this point to induce him to say that he believed there was any such connection, although men were often inclined to believe what they wished to be true. The Noble Lord, however, had confidently said, that no man doubted

the

the fact, that the outrage upon the King, which they all lamented, was ascribable to the meeting in the fields near Islington. He would tell the Noble Lord, that he doubted it, and that upon his honour he did not believe that there was the smallest connection between the London Corresponding Society and the mob, who committed the outrage in Westminster on the first day of the Session. The London Corresponding Society had no more to do with it than his Majesty's Cabinet. The Cabinet were ten times more involved, because by their commencement of the war, and by their mad continuance of it, they had reduced the lower order of people to the most abject and intolerable distress; was it to be wondered at, therefore, if some thirty or fifty infatuated individuals, in a mixed assembly of 100,000, should break out and vent their indignation in any manner that the irritation of the moment suggested? It was, in his mind, much to be lamented, that they should have done so, but he did not believe the London Corresponding Society were more chargeable with what had happened than any of their Lordships. For his part, he knew no more of the proceedings in the fields, than what he had learnt from the Lord Chancellor of England on the woolsack, who had told them all, when he condescended to become a reporter, and state the account which the Telegraph gave of what had happened in the fields near Islington; but supposing that all the acts charged on the London Corresponding Society were really committed by them, they were, in his consideration, trifling indeed, when put in comparison with the calamities brought on the country by his Majesty's ministers. It became the duty of the Noble Lord, as it was the duty of the House, to examine into facts before they adopted such precedents as the noble Lord had quoted to them, and he well knew that they did not dare to come down with the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act without going into a previous enquiry, and investigation of facts; they did not ask it on the production of pikes or a speech, but by a minute enquiry in a Select Committee, where a voluminous proof of examinations and drawings furnished what they thought a plausible reason for adopting that measure. He knew only of two reasons for this difference of conduct; first, that upon the former occasion there was no danger by going into an enquiry, because the facts were not true; and secondly, on this occasion if the facts were found to be true, the proposed remedy was so much weaker that it could produce no salutary effect. But as far as was yet known, the assertions upon which the present measure was founded were so general, that no man could believe them upon such authority. He would not allow the precedents in the

the reign of Charles II. to apply at all to the preſent caſe, nor that the ſituation of the country now was ſuch as to admit the neceſſity of ſuch a meaſure. He expreſſed the ſtrongeſt feelings of loyalty and attachment to the King and Conſtitution; and as a proof of what he ſaid, reſted ſolely on his conduct in the preſent Bill, compared with that of his Majeſty's Miniſters; for while they wiſhed to increaſe and extend the ſeverity of the penal laws, they did nothing to protect or ſecure the perſonal ſafety of the King; and he begged them to remember that whatever times they looked to for precedents, they would not find that ſevere puniſhments for treaſonable crimes was the ſureſt way to promote the real love of the King in the hearts of his people, which was the beſt protection any King could enjoy. The noble Lord complained of the high tone he had held on a former night; his tones were generally much the ſame; but he could aſſure the noble Lord, he had heard nothing that would incline him to diminiſh in tone, particularly experiencing the benefit derived from what he then ſaid. It had induced the noble Lord to give up one ſtrong point, and that being the caſe, he was inclined to be ſtill higher, if he thought he could poſſibly make the Bill yet more palatable by any exertions of his. As to his mode of marking what the noble Lord ſaid, he believed it was no ways uncommon, and having liſtened attentively to what the noble Lord ſaid when he gave up the point of *malicious and adviſed ſpeaking*, he could not loſe this opportunity of offering him his gratitude for the encouragement he gave him, that by perſiſting in oppoſition to this Bill, more good conſequences might enſue, and that it would be an injury to the public were he to ſtop at this ſtage of the buſineſs. It was not for the noble Lord's arguments, but his conceſſions, that he thanked him. As to the wording of the Bill, it was not an exact copy of any former law, for there were expreſſions in it to which no preciſe meaning could be affixed; in fact it was an entire new law, not leſs favourable to the ſubject than that which paſſed in the reign of Richard II. and when they reflected on the events that followed, God forbid that the noble Lord had any thing prophetic in view by the preſent meaſure. The noble Lord here went into an hiſtorical review of the events that had occurred in different reigns, and the effects of ſanguinary laws againſt treaſon, as conducive more to the deſtruction of monarchical governments, than to protect the latter, and preſerve public tranquillity. He repeated what he ſaid on the former night, that by the exception in favour of Members of Parliament, the reſtrictions were meant to prevent all others from meeting for any public purpoſe. He adverted to the right of

granting

granting money in the other Houſe of Parliament, and aſked if the noble Lord choſe to follow the precedent of the 13th Charles II. and deſire the Commons to grant three years pay to the army, whether he could expect to ſucceed in ſuch an attempt? He contended ſtrongly for the propriety of taking precedents from better times, and then recurred to the ſtatute of Edward III. which at preſent was reckoned the beſt definition of the treaſon laws, and which was very different from the preſent Bill. When this Bill was introduced without any ſort of evidence for its neceſſity on a former night, ſome had imagined it came from ſome ſiniſter views into the Houſe; he was one who thought ſo, and was now confirmed in that opinion. He compared the preamble of the Bill with its contents, and denied that there was any thing in it that was applicable to any circumſtances that were known to exiſt, or called for on account of the meeting that had been alluded to. As to that part of the Bill concerning miſdemeanours, he thought it more dangerous than the other, for where treaſon was the crime, and a man's life was at ſtake, both Judges and Juries acted with more heſitation, and of courſe the ſubject was better guarded, and he could not help thinking that the words of this part was a libel on the times held out as a precedent, by words being put in that were never before uſed;—for inſtance, the word Conſtitution—who could define it in an Act of Parliament? Law and Government could be defined, but he had good authority, from a famous pamphlet well known to Miniſters, to ſay that the word Conſtitution could not. From the wording of this clauſe he muſt inſiſt that it created new crimes by new phraſes. The word People came under the ſame uncertainty as Conſtitution, and was in no other Act. He ſtill, however, conceived the reſervation in favour of Members of Parliament to be the moſt dangerous innovation of the law; and when laws were either ſtrained to a degree of oppreſſion, or new laws made totally ſubverſive of the liberty of the ſubject, it muſt be expected, and would follow, that the people would reſort to force. This ſeemed to diſpleaſe ſome noble Lords, but he was juſtified by great and known authorities in ſaying, that times and circumſtances might be ſuch as not only to juſtify, but to make reſiſtance become a duty. He was much againſt Parliament giving great latitude to Judges by any new powers. With regard to Peers, in all former Bills of this ſort, there had been a clauſe ſtating that they ſhould be tried at the bar, but in this Bill it was omitted; and upon conſideration, that omiſſion would become hard upon the order to which he had the honour to belong, who, if any of them ſhould have the misfortune to be tried for a miſdemeanour under

 this

this Bill, would be in a ſituation very different from an Engliſh Peer, as, by the law of Scotland, fourteen years tranſportation might be paſſed on him or any other perſon convicted of the miſdemeanour of ſedition, whereas the Bill limited the puniſhment, even upon the ſecond conviction, in this part of the kingdom, to ſeven years tranſportation at the utmoſt.

Lord Lauderdale concluded his ſpeech with obſerving, that if the preſent Bill was only one of a ſeries to be introduced, it was truly alarming. He thought the ſpirit of oppoſition no bad ſpirit, and remarked the bad ſucceſs of our arms, and the preſent ſcarcity which made the people feel the preſſure of want, without any alleviation from the contemplation of victory, or the gratification of national pride; the difference of revenue now, from the days of Charles, and the opinion of Blackſtone upon the ſubject. He ſaid that the ſtate of public affairs, and the proſpect of the finances, was ſuch as to deter every rational man from interfering.

Lord Mansfield ſaid, that, differing with the noble Lord upon many of the topics which he had introduced with ſo much eloquence into the diſcuſſion, he perfectly agreed with him in the obſervations on the danger of extraordinary powers veſted in the Executive Government. He could not repoſe ſo much confidence in the integrity of any Miniſters as to confer an authority they might eaſily abuſe, and in their exerciſe he would diſtruſt even the noble Lord's moderation. Yet it had ever been the practice of this country to accommodate the laws of treaſon to the circumſtances which occurred, and to enact ſuch regulations as the exigencies of the caſe required. Could their Lordſhips forget the proviſions adopted in the reign of King William the Third and Queen Anne for the ſecurity of the Proteſtant ſucceſſion? The periods from which the precedents were drawn had been much inſiſted on, though he conceived that the preſent Bill was in itſelf a wiſe and ſalutary meaſure, and had no need to be defended by example. He had, however, heard with ſurpriſe the arguments maintained upon this head. Reprobated as the times of Charles the Second had been, he would venture to ſay that they were good times. He aſked, who was the Miniſter at the æra alluded to? It was the Earl of Clarendon, whoſe attachment to the Conſtitution and diſtinguiſhed virtues had contributed eſſentially to its preſervation, and whoſe whole conduct exhibited a model which was worthy the imitation of every Miniſter. He would not follow the noble Lord through the wide field of extraneous matter into which he had deviated. Yet he could not hear without ſurpriſe the aſſertion, that no ſucceſs had taken place in the courſe of the war which could gratify

gratify the pride of Engliſhmen. Did the noble Lord look where he looked (turning to Lord Howe), he would be forced to acknowledge that glorious ſucceſſes had occurred, which had never been ſurpaſſed in the hiſtory of this country. Theſe topics, however, he would purpoſely avoid.

There were two points which it was important to conſider—Firſt, Whether in the exiſting circumſtances any proviſion were neceſſary, and whether that now propoſed was proper to be adopted? He believed there was but one ſentiment, with regard to the outrage committed on his Majeſty; but it was their duty to guard againſt the renewal of ſuch attempt: and was it not a moſt alarming criſis, when the King could not meet his Parliament in ſecurity? He lamented that the noble Earl had not ſpecified the new treaſons created by the Bill of which he complained. It had been ſaid, that the ſtatute of Edward the Third was ſufficient; but he conſidered this ſtatute as furniſhing too many evaſions, and as liable to too much uncertainty, to be a ſuitable remedy for ſuch an attack as had been made upon his Majeſty. The ſtatute of Queen Elizabeth had been juſtified by her ſituation; but he would remark that the proviſions it contains are copied into that of Queen Anne. A denial of her right was declared to be High Treaſon; and, upon this Act a perſon had been convicted and executed.

In Charles the Second's reign, he ſaid, much of the leaven of Republicaniſm remained. There were alſo Fifth Monarchy Men, who indeed differed from the Republicans of the preſent day, who wiſhed for no King, as they adhered to the idea of a King of a certain deſcription. On the ſecond part, he juſtified the words "and Conſtitution" which had been put into the clauſe after the words eſtabliſhed Government. He conſidered the words as in every view proper and parliamentary. He had too good an opinion of every noble Lord preſent to imagine that there was any deſign to excite alarm in the minds of the people, though the light in which the noble Lord repreſented the operation of the clauſe might have a pernicious effect. The people of this country had been accuſtomed to hold their conſtitution in the utmoſt veneration, and to prize the bleſſings it produced; and he hoped this ſentiment in general was not decayed in conſequence of the compariſons they had of late an opportunity to make. With regard to another topic which had formerly been debated, the conduct of the Court of Juſticiary, he ſtill was of opinion that the Judges had in the inſtances alluded to exerciſed the diſcretion the law committed to them; and ſuch had been the opinion of every lawyer, the noble Lord himſelf, who would have proved ſo great an ornament

 to

to the profeffion, alone excepted. He thought that the claufe which the noble Lord had arraigned, left the Scotch Peers precifely as it found them, and interfered with none of their privileges. He could not agree with the infinuation that feven years tranfportation was too high a punifhment for the fecond offence, and though told that it would give diffatisfaction without doors, he would not allow this circumftance to influence his mind, in fpite of the unpopularity his conduct might occafion. The dangerous tendency of the evil demanded a powerful remedy. The experience of every age and country had demonftrated the fatal effects of fedition. However men of fenfe might defpife the grofs publications fo induftrioufly circulated, it was a miftake to imagine that their groffnefs would form the antidote to their pernicious influence. It was eafy when the cup was prefented to the multitude to conceal the poifon it contained. The moft enormous crimes had been found to originate in the delufions which falfe principles had infpired, and the murderers of Henry the IVth confeffed, that they had been induced to perpetrate the crime by the doctrines they had imbibed. The prefent times of France furnifhed a confirmation of this opinion. He had enjoyed various opportunities of obferving and ftudying the manners of that nation. He had traced the progrefs of irreligion, and of the doctrines which at length had overthrown all humanity, all order, all morality. Such a dreadful cataftrophe he had not forefeen, but he had long perceived that univerfal and fafhionable fpirit of Atheifm, threatening fome great convulfion.

He had heard in that Houfe of the bugbear of Jacobin principles they had been in ufe to hold out to their Lordfhips. He would arrogate to himfelf the pride of having merited this cenfure. He entertained a dread of the diffufion of the French principles much ftronger than the devaftations of the moft cruel peftilence. At any rate they fhould not fleep at the helm. They fhould oppofe its progrefs. He was convinced of the almoft univerfal loyalty of the people of this country, and the prefent was a moft proper opportunity for its difplay; but this ought not to fhut their eyes to the danger which now preffed. He believed that Jacobin principles had been feverely checked, but that now they feemed to revive in the dangerous publications diffeminated among the people, and in the atrocious attack upon his Majefty. He cautioned the Houfe againft being lulled into fecurity by the fyren eloquence of the noble Lord. Would they refufe additional fafeguards for the prefervation of his Majefty, and of the Conftitution, which would be implicated in his fate. He faid he would avoid every attempt to

deceive by departing from the rigid rules of argument, or by addressing their feelings. He would not mention the perſonal intereſt which they would take in the welfare of a King whoſe tenderneſs in private intercourſe could not fail to intereſt their affections, nor would he dwell upon that fortitude of character which enabled his Majeſty to endure the preſſure of thoſe evils which aſſailed him with the moſt dignified piety and reſignation.

LORD LAUDERDALE explained, that he never meant any diſreſpect to the perſonal merit and behaviour of our commanders, ſeamen, and troops; but on the contrary, that he thought their abilitiesand courage had been rendered more illuſtrious, by the miſmanagement and inattention of Miniſters.

LORD GRENVILLE was proceeding to paſs ſome very ſevere ſtrictures on certain expreſſions of Lord Lauderdale, when he was interrupted by that Noble Lord, who pointedly explained the expreſſion to which Lord Grenville alluded.

LORD GRENVILLE was going on as before, but was called to order by Lord Thurlow, who vindicated the right of every member of the Houſe to ſtate every circumſtance, which might induce their Lordſhips either to reject or ſupport any meaſure in agitation. He treated the doctrine of reſiſtance as a matter of which as little as poſſible ſhould be ſaid.

LORD GRENVILLE then replied to Lord Lauderdale at conſiderable length, which again called up the latter.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK contended that the doctrine of reſiſtance was a principle of the Conſtitution, to which the family of Brunſwick owed their elevation, and which in every ſituation he would remember, though he would not fix the preciſe occaſion on which it ought to be employed. He was of opinion that upon the evidence they had received at the bar on the firſt day of the Seſſion, ſome meaſure might have been propoſed for preventing his Majeſty from being diſturbed in his paſſage to Parliament, which he thought not ſufficiently provided for by the ſtatute of Edward III. yet he ſaid that in its preſent form, and embracing ſuch variety of objects, he would reluctantly vote againſt the Bill.

THE EARL OF ABINGDON oppoſed the Bill, but he ſpoke in ſo low a tone, that one could not make out diſtinctly his argument. He ſpoke of his own caſe, and ſaid that when his mind was tranquilized he ſhould vote for ſending a Learned Lord to the Tower.

THE DUKE OF LEEDS ſaid, that his reſpect for the ſacred perſon of his Majeſty would induce him to conſent to go into a Committee with the Bill, in hopes that it might be ſo qualified, as to be a ſure protection to the King without violating the rights of the

 People.

People. It was material for their Lordſhips to weigh the Bill moſt ſeriouſly, for there never was a meaſure more imminent in its conſequences to the King and People. He would wiſh to leave out the word Government altogether. It was more general, and capable of a wider latitude of conſtruction, even than the word Conſtitution.

The Marquis of Townshend ſaw nothing in the Bill to prevent Counties from deliberating on public meaſures, and expreſſing their free opinion on every ſubject.

The Duke of Bedford concluded the debate by ſaying, that no ſatisfactory anſwers had been given to the arguments againſt this Bill, but ſpecial care had been taken to miſapprehend what had fallen from him and others. He had ſtated diſtinctly, that if any additional ſecurity could be given to his Majeſty's perſon beyond what the exiſting laws conferred, the meaſure ſhould have his moſt hearty approbation. This Bill, in his opinion, did not give his Majeſty any additional ſecurity, while it affected the moſt valuable rights of Engliſhmen, and therefore, he again declared, that he ſhould think it his duty to give the Bill the moſt decided oppoſition in every legal way that it could be oppoſed, and that in every ſtage both in that Houſe and out of it; for if that Bill paſſed into a law, there was ſuch an infringment of the Conſtitution as no man could contemplate without horror.

The queſtion was then put, and the Houſe divided;

Contents — 56—Proxies 23.
Not Contents 7—Proxy 1.

The Bill was then ordered to be committed to-morrow.

THE MINORITY WERE,

The Duke of Bedford,	The Earl of Derby,
The Earl of Lauderdale,	The Earl of Besborough,
The Earl of Abingdon,	Lord Viſcount St. John,
Lord Viſcount Chedworth,	Proxy—Earl of Guildford.

THE KING's PROCLAMATIONS.

House of Commons, *Monday, November* 10.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the Order of the Day, for taking into conſideration his Majeſty's Proclamations of Oct. 31ſt, and Nov. 4th, 1795.

The ſame having been read, the Chancellor of the Exchequer roſe, and ſaid, the circumſtances, upon which he meant to ground the proceedings of that night had made ſo deep an impreſſion on the mind of every gentleman in that Houſe, as well as on that of every man in the country, that it would not be neceſſary

for

for him to make any comments on them. The public had ſeen with becoming indignation, that a virtuous and beloved Sovereign had been attacked in the moſt criminal and outrageous manner, and at a time too when he was in the exerciſe of the greateſt and moſt important function of kingly capacity, when he was going to aſſemble the great council of the nation; that great, and indeed only reſource againſt every national evil. The firſt impulſes of every man's mind, after an attack ſo immediately directed againſt the life of the King of theſe realms, muſt be thoſe of horror and deteſtation of the wicked, the diabolical wretches, who in contempt of the reſpect and reverence due to the ſacred character of their Sovereign—in contempt of the whole legiſlature, by a kind of concentered malice, directed a blow at once at its three branches, in attempting to aſſaſſinate a mild and benignant Monarch, who is the great cement and centre of our glorious conſtitution. In contemplating this calamity, the Houſe would feel that ſome correction muſt be given to the laws, at preſent in force againſt ſuch crimes; means muſt be found to repreſs the ſpirit which gave birth to ſo daring an outrage, and to prevent ſuch unprecedented conſequences of ſedition, and of ſedition too leading to aſſaſſination by the moſt deſpicable as well as the moſt dangerous of all modes of attack, againſt the vital principles of the ſtate, in the perſon of our Sovereign.

If, under this firſt impreſſion, every man ſhould think himſelf called upon by the loyalty and allegiance he owed to the ſovereign office, and affection to the perſon of the Sovereign, by the reverence due to religion, by ſelf-preſervation itſelf, and the happineſs of ſociety at large, to apply a remedy to thoſe very alarming ſymptoms, (which, he was ſure would be the caſe) another impreſſion would ariſe out of it, equally forcible and equally obvious, namely, that they would do this buſineſs but by halves, and act careleſsly and ineffectually, if they directed their attention only to that ſeparate act, and not to thoſe very miſchievous and formidable circumſtances, which were connected with it, in point of principles, and which produced it, in point of fact.

In endeavouring to lead the attention of the Houſe to the remedies, which appeared to him moſt likely to be efficient to this purpoſe, he would not advert to legal diſtinctions, but to prudential principles. If the Houſe viewed the ſeparate act with that eye of horror he conceived they muſt, and if, viewing it ſo, they felt the conviction, that a repetition of ſuch enormities ſhould be prevented immediately; the next point, that would impreſs itſelf upon their minds, as ariſing from the two former, was, that they ſhould adopt

ſome means to prevent thoſe ſeditious aſſemblies, which ſerved as vehicles to faction and diſloyalty, which fanned and kept alive the flame of diſaffection, and filled the minds of the people with diſcontent. He had the moſt indubitable proof to ſupport him in ſaying, that this ſentiment pervaded not only that Houſe, but all the kingdom; and that in no one inſtance which had ever occurred, were the Commons called upon more loudly by the wiſhes and prayers of an anxious community, than they were at this time by the whole people of England, to avert the ruin with which thoſe aſſemblies menaced the country, by preventing their further proceedings. In full hopes that the Houſe felt the force of theſe impreſſions as forcibly as he did, and would agree to ſome ſuch meaſure as he had allnded to, his motion of that day would go to that object. It might, perhaps, occur to gentlemen, that a law ſhould be previouſly made for the protection of his Majeſty's perſon; but he informed them, that the other Houſe had now under its conſideration a Bill to that effect, which he hoped would ſoon be laid before them for their concurrence. His motion, therefore, was not directed to alter or enforce the laws for the King's ſafety, but to prevent thoſe meetings, to which all the miſchiefs he had mentioned were attributable.

The meetings to which he alluded were, he ſaid, of two deſcriptions; under the firſt of thoſe deſcriptions, fell thoſe meetings, which, under a pretext (to which they by no means adhered) of petitioning Parliament for rights, of which they affected to be deprived, agitated queſtions, and promulgated opinions and inſinuations, hoſtile to the exiſting government, and tending to bring it into diſrepute with the people. The other deſcription, though leſs numerous, not leſs public, nor leſs dangerous, were concerted evidently for the purpoſe of diſſeminating unjuſt grounds of jealouſy, diſcontent, and falſe complaints againſt the conſtitution, of irritating the minds of the people againſt their lawful governors, and of encouraging them to acts of even treaſon itſelf. Both theſe required ſome ſtrong law to prevent them; for, if the arm of Executive Government was not ſtrengthened by ſuch a law they would be continued, if not to the utter ruin, certainly to the indelible diſgrace, of the country.

As to the firſt of thoſe deſcriptions, no one would venture to deny the right of the people to expreſs their opinions on political men and meaſures, and to diſcuſs and aſſert their right of petitioning all the branches of the legiſlature; nor was there any man who would be farther from encroaching on that right than he.

It

It was undoubtedly a moſt valuable privilege, of which nothing ſhould deprive them. But if a valuable and rightful privilege was made a pretext for acts deſtructive to the peace and happineſs of the people, and ſubverſive of the eſtabliſhed government, it was the object of the people no leſs than of the throne, to prevent the continuance of ſuch an abuſe.

This conſideration, he confeſſed, occaſioned conſiderable difficulty, but it did not create an inſuperable dilemma: in applying the deſired remedy, two things were to be looked to—the firſt, to correct the abuſe of a ſacred and invaluable privilege; the ſecond, to preſerve that privilege inviolate: caution was therefore neceſſary, leſt, on the one hand, they ſhould encroach on the rights of the people, or, on the other, ſuffer the abuſe of thoſe rights to become the inſtrument of their total extinction. This was a matter of great delicacy, and ſhould be attended to in the detail; but the Houſe would ſee, that, at preſent, the real queſtion was, "did not the preſſure of the moment call for SOME remedy?"

According to opinions which he had collected, as well as he had been able, from others, and ſuch as he had formed for himſelf, the great point wanted at this moment, was a more clear and defined power in the magiſtrate, to diſperſe and put an end to all meetings likely to be productive of conſequences ſuch as were already mentioned. He by no means meant this power of diſperſion to extend to meetings profeſſedly and obviouſly lawful, and held for legal and conſtitutional purpoſes; but that in every caſe of a numerous meeting, of whatever nature, or under whatever colour, notice ſhould be given, ſo as to enable the magiſtrate to keep a watchful eye over their proceedings—to recognize the power of the magiſtrate to be preſent at ſuch meetings, and to enforce penalties on thoſe who ſhould obſtruct him in doing ſo; and, on whatever pretext the meeting might be held, if it appeared to be of a kind that was likely to promote ſedition againſt Government, to inveſt the magiſtrate with power to apprehend the perſons on the ſpot—to make any obſtruction to the magiſtrate felony—and to make a proviſion, that if arreſting ſhould not be found ſufficient to diſperſe the meeting, they ſhould be diſperſed in the ſame manner, and under the ſame penalties, as thoſe contained in the Riot Act. The Houſe would ſee that this ſummary power in the magiſtrate, while it would ſtill leave to the people the fair right to petition, on the one hand, would, on the other, prevent the abuſe of it. This, he ſaid, was the outline. All detail he would reſerve for future diſcuſſion.

Under the other defcription of meetings, through which the minds of the people were poifoned, fell thofe of public lecturers, who made the diffemination of fedition the fource of livelihood—to them he thought it would be proper to apply regulations, fomething like thofe that paffed about fourteen years ago, in an Act, which, from the learned Gentleman who brought it in, was called *Mansfield*'s Act, and by which all houfes wherein meetings of an improper kind were held on a Sunday, were to be treated as *diforderly houfes*. And, to avoid evafion, the claufe fhould apply to every houfe wherein any people met, exceeding by a certain number to be ftated in the Act, the real family of the houfe. " So convinced am I (faid he) that there can be but one feeling, and one opinion, that fome meafure of this kind is neceffary; [here a cry of "*hear!*" from the oppofite fide] and fo little am I fhaken in that conviction by the adverfe vociferations of *hear! hear!* that I am fure I fhould but fhew a diftruft of the caufe if I faid any more—I will therefore only move,

" That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies."

As foon as the Speaker read the motion,

MR. FOX faid, he trufted it was unneceffary for him to preface what he had to fay, by a declaration which he hoped, for every member of that Houfe, was equally unneceffary; that he felt as much horror at the attempt which was made againft his Majefty as any man in this kingdom, quite as much as any man who might move, who might fecond, or who might fupport the Bill, which, it feems, was to be offered to the Houfe. Having agreed fo far with the Minifter that night, there he muft take his leave of him. He did not think he fhould well exprefs his feelings, if he declared that his indignation at what happened, even on that day, was more than equal to what he felt from what he had heard that night. The Right Honourable Gentleman had adverted to a Bill, at that time, in the other Houfe, which was ftated to have for its object the better fecurity of his Majefty's perfon, and, on which, it was probable the Houfe would have fome communication with their Lordfhips. He believed it would be difficult for the Right Honourable Gentleman to fhew the neceffity for that Bill, if he meant to ground that neceffity upon the affumption, that what happened on the firft day of the Seffion was in confequence of what paffed at meetings to which he had alluded. He difapproved highly of all thefe experiments, which were profeffed to be intended as fecurities for the enjoyment of all the bleffings of our confti-

tution.

tution. He knew the conftitution had exifted for ages fufficiently guarded by the law as it now ftood, and therefore, if the Right Honourable Gentleman had not opened his plan, which he declared ftruck him with horror; if he had not faid a fingle word upon that deteftable plan, he fhould have given his negative to the propofition in queftion; becaufe the propofition itfelf laid it down as an affumed fact, that the law at prefent is infufficient to prevent breaches of the public peace. It was faid, there was a feditious meeting held fomewhere in the neighbourhood of the metropolis a few days before the meeting of Parliament; that at fuch meeting very alarming proceedings had taken place, ftriking at the very exiftence of Parliament itfelf. That fuch proceedings took place he did not know; but this he knew, if fpeeches were made that had fuch a tendency, the fpeakers were amenable to the law. If hand-bills were diftributed that had fuch a tendency, the diftributors were amenable to the law. If any perfon had fo conducted himfelf as to be the means of caufing the people fo affembled to form a refolution, having fuch a tendency, he was amenable to the law, and when proved guilty, was liable to adequate punifhment. But this Bill was to proceed upon the flimfy pretext, that all the violence and outrage that had been offered to his Majefty was the refult of this meeting, of which there was not the colour of proof. He knew, indeed, that the Right Honourable Gentleman had attempted to connect them; he knew too there had been, and would be, endeavours to confound the two things.

It was, he faid, ridiculous to talk of thefe things being perfectly notorious; that thefe proceedings were clearly feditious; they were points upon which that Houfe could not regularly proceed, for they were points on which there was no proof. Nothing was more clear than that the Houfe of Commons ought never to proceed upon any meafure that might trefpafs upon the rights of the public, without evidence that was clear and decifive, even in cafes of extreme neceffity; but there was no evidence whatever to connect any of the proceedings of thefe meetings with the daring infult offered to his Majefty. The Right Honourable Gentleman had faid, fhould not the Houfe endeavour to prevent the repetition of fuch an infult? Undoubtedly it fhould. But then it fhould be upon evidence; and here the rights of perfons meeting any where, to confult on public meafures, was to be affected in confequence of what happened to his Majefty on the firft day of the Seffion, although there was no evidence to prove that the outrage arofe from any proceedings that were had at any public meeting

ing previous to that day. Some perſons perhaps might conſider the Proclamation itſelf as evidence; he could agree to no ſuch rule: he well knew there were thoſe who doubted the truth of the foundation of Proclamations; who believed many of them to be the acts of Miniſters for certain purpoſes of their own, for the increaſe of power; and he was ſure it was not regular in that Houſe, it was not fair, to take things for granted, becauſe they appear in a Proclamation. Theſe were ſtrong objections to proceeding upon this ſubject without better evidence. All this, however, was trifling in compariſon with what the Right Hon. Gentleman had ſaid upon the ſubject. He had ſaid, there might be a difficulty to preſerve the rights of petitioners, and to prevent abuſes of that right. Difficulty and delicacy he confeſſed there were; but that did not embarraſs him; for he ſaid, they might be ſettled in the detail. Thus the Right Hon. Gentleman talked with eaſe on the rights of the ſubject, as if he expected to bring the public to ſubmit to the moſt rigid deſpotiſm. In that detail, Mr. Fox ſaid, he ſhould never take a ſhare, for he would never attend the detail of a meaſure which in its eſſence was deteſtable. The Right Hon. Gentleman had hinted at two points. With regard to the firſt, that of public meetings, for the diſcuſſion of public ſubjects, he muſt not only confeſs them to be lawful, but he muſt allow them alſo to be agreeable to the very eſſence of the Britiſh conſtitution, and to which, under that conſtitution, moſt of the liberties we enjoy are particularly owing. The Right Hon. Gentleman had ſaid, that theſe meetings were not to be prevented, they were only to be regulated. "Attend (ſaid Mr. Fox) to the regulation. I thought I knew the rights of man—aye, and the rights of Engliſhmen. [Here was a prodigious cry hear! hear!] What! ſaid he, that is a ſlip, you ſuppoſe. The rights of man is a ſentence without a meaning. Do you ſay that men have no natural rights? If ſo, Engliſhmen's rights can have no exiſtence; nay, this Houſe would have no exiſtence. The rights of man, I ſay, are clear; man has natural rights; and he who denies it is ignorant of the baſis of a free government; he is ignorant of the beſt principle of ours, for theſe rights are naturally connected with the beſt parts of the hiſtory of our country."

The people, he had always thought, had a right to diſcuſs the topics from which their grievances aroſe by themſelves. In all inſtances, they had a right to complain by petition, and to remonſtrate to either Houſe of Parliament, or, if they pleaſed, to the King excluſively: but now, it ſeems, they are not to do ſo, unleſs notice be given to a magiſtrate, that he may become a witneſs of

their

their proceedings. There were to be witnesses of every word that every man spoke. This magistrate, this jealous witness, was to form his own opinion on the propriety of the proceedings; and if he should think that any thing that was said had a tendency to sedition, he had power to arrest the man who uttered it. Not only so, he had power to dissolve the meeting at his own will. "Say at once (said Mr. Fox) that a free constitution is no longer suitable to us; say at once, in a manly manner, that, upon an ample review of the state of this world at this moment, a free constitution is not fit for you; conduct yourselves at once as the senators of Denmark did, lay down your freedom, and acknowledge and accept of despotism. But do not mock the understandings and the feelings of mankind, by telling the world that you are free—by telling me that, if out of the House, for the purpose of expressing my sense of the public administration of this country, of the calamities which this war has occasioned, I state a grievance by petition, or make any declaration of my sentiments, which I always had a right to do; but which if now I do, in a manner that may appear to a magistrate to be seditious, I am to be subjected to penalties which hitherto were unknown to the laws of England. If in stating any of these things out of the House, a magistrate should be of opinion that I am irregular, he is to have the power to stop me: he may say—"The cause which you alledge for your grievance is unfounded; you excite, by what you say, jealousies and discontents that are unfounded;" and, if either to his judgment or to his wishes, I say what should be concealed, he is to have a power to stop me—nay, even to treat me as a rioter, if I don't obey him. I ask again, if this be called a meeting of free people?—Did ever a free people meet so?—Did ever a free state exist so?—Did any man ever hypothetically state the possibility of the existence of Freedom under such restrictions? Good God Almighty, Sir! is it possible that the feelings of the people of this country should be thus insulted?—Is it possible to make the people of this country believe, that this plan is any thing but a total annihilation of their liberty?"

The Right Hon. Gentleman had next adverted to a Bill which had been passed to prevent the assembling of persons for the discussion of questions on the Lord's Day, from which he was to bring in a Bill to prevent the discussion of questions on any day; and this, he said, was to be applicable to all cases where money was to be taken. Why all questions were to be prohibited where money was to be taken, merely on an allegation that such questions *might* produce mischief, was, he confessed, beyond his skill to understand.

ſtand. But this was to be not all;—it was applicable, it ſeemed, to places where no money was to be taken, becauſe, in truth, perſons might be admitted by means of tickets; and they muſt not amount to a number beyond a certain one which the Miniſter ſhould be pleaſed to inſert in his Bill, unleſs duly licenſed by a magiſtrate. He would aſk again—Was this, or was it not, *To prevent all political diſcuſſion whatever?*

Let him aſk whence aroſe this practice? Let them ſhew him when this had obtained ſince the Revolution, or at any time when this country could be called a free one; and he would then confeſs they had indeed ſhewn him a rare ſingularity. The people are to be prevented from diſcuſſing public topics publicly; they are prevented from diſcuſſing them privately; if then, without this private intercourſe or public debate, the grievances of this country are to be felt, and are ſuch as to call forth a general deſire that they ſhould be redreſſed; what are the public to do? They muſt ſend, it ſeems, to a magiſtrate, and under his good leave they are to be permitted to proceed. [Here there was a general cry of *No*, *No*.] "I do not mean, ſaid Mr. Fox, to overſtate this power. God knows there is no occaſion for that, for there ſeems to be ſufficient care taken of magiſterial authority in every ſtep of this proceeding.

"Behold the ſtate of a free Engliſhman! Before he can diſcuſs any topic which involves his liberty, he muſt ſend to a magiſtrate, who is to attend the diſcuſſion. That magiſtrate cannot prevent ſuch meeting. Good, ſound law. He cannot, and ſhould not indeed prevent the meeting. But he can prevent the ſpeaking, becauſe he can alledge, that what is ſaid tends to diſturb the peace and tranquillity of this realm. Sir, I hope this Bill will never come into this Houſe. I am not friendly to any thing that will produce violence. Thoſe who know me will not impute to me any ſuch deſire; but I do hope, that this Bill will produce an alarm: that while we have the power of aſſembling, the people will aſſemble: that while they have the power, they will not ſurrender it, but come forward and do themſelves juſtice; ſtate their abhorrence of the principle of this proceeding; and thoſe who do not, I here pronounce to be traitors to their country! If they neglect it, this peaceable means of obtaining redreſs to grievances will be all over. Good God, Sir, what madneſs, what frenzy has overtaken the authors of this meaſure! I will ſuppoſe for a moment that the only object which they have in view is the preventing a revolution in this country. But that they ſhould have proceeded upon a plan which has no regard for the liberty of the people, no regard for the glorious efforts of our anceſtors, no regard for their maxims,

 no

no eſteem for the experience to be derived from a peruſal of our hiſtory, no eſteem for the principles and the conduct which has made us what we are, or rather, if this Bill be countenanced, what we were, is to me aſtoniſhing! For thus to proceed to ſuppreſs or to prevent popular tumults, appears to me to be the worſt and the moſt deſperate of frenzy. Good God, Sir! I have ſeen, and I have heard of revolutions in different ſtates. What were they owing to? Were they owing to the freedom of popular opinions? Were they owing to the facility of popular meetings? No, Sir, they were owing to the reverſe of theſe; and therefore I ſay, if we wiſh to avoid the danger of ſuch revolutions, we ſhould put ourſelves in a ſtate as different from them as poſſible. What are we now doing? Putting ourſelves in a condition as nearly as we can to thoſe when theſe revolutions happened; particularly to that which at this hour is moſt intereſting to us, the reign of Charles I. We all know what then happened. Was that a time when freedom of debate at public meetings was too extenſively allowed? Was freedom of ſpeech then too much countenanced? Were libels then too often overlooked; or their authors inſufficiently puniſhed? Look at France. Who does not know what the government of that country was? And who will deny that if we paſs this Bill, we ſhall too much reſemble the ſtate of that country previous to its revolution? What produced that revolution? Too much freedom of debate in popular aſſemblies? Too much facility of public meetings? No, Sir. It was their *Lettres de Cachet*, and other means which were made uſe of to prevent the public from manifeſting their opinions on the affairs of government. We ſhould therefore, to avoid a diſtreſs ſimilar to theirs, avoid the cauſe that occaſioned it. Sir, it has been the characteriſtic bleſſing of our conſtitution, that it admitted of various ways in which the opinions of the public, nay, if you pleaſe, in which the ill opinions, the prejudices, and the ill humours of the body politic may have vent: and if their grievances be true, they may be redreſſed; if the allegation of them be falſe, the evil effects of their perſiſting in complaint may be prevented; but if you take away their hitherto well known and legal method of ſtating their diſapprobation of the meaſures of Government, you bring the beſt part of the conſtitution of this country upon a level with the moſt deſpotic; you bring the people of this country to the terrible ſituation of thoſe who have no alternative between a total and abject ſubmiſſion to the tyrannical acts of Government, and a remedy by violence and force of arms. You reduce them to that ſtate in which the beſt cauſe will produce the greateſt evils to ſupport it, evils which it is hardly poſſible for the beſt cauſe to juſtify. Can there be a good reaſon for

reducing

reducing the people of this country to this dreadful dilemma? If their complaints be unfounded, what can you have to fear? For the more vehemently and the more loudly they expreſs their complaints, if they be groundleſs, the leſs effect they will ultimately have. But if you prevent diſcuſſion, if you ſtop up this vent for the humour of the body politic, there can be no alternative, as I ſaid before, between abject ſubmiſſion and violent reſiſtance. Sir, this ſyſtem may laſt for a long or ſhort time; but it muſt terminate either in a ſubmiſſion that will put an end at once to all the liberties of the people, or in actual open violence and fury: in either caſe the alternative is dreadful! and although I know that peace and quietneſs are great bleſſings, yet, as liberty is the only ſecurity for the enjoyment of them, I ſhall therefore truſt that the public will adhere to the beſt principles of our conſtitution, and expreſs their opinions freely upon this ſubject, not by the will of any magiſtrate, for that I know they will not follow, but as the cauſe may require. I have done my duty in ſtating my ſentiments to this Houſe. If this Bill is to be brought in I ſhall then have another duty to perform, which will be to move for a Call of this Houſe, becauſe I think that I ſhould betray my conſtituents and the public, if I did not call upon every Member of this Houſe to attend in his place to give his opinion by his vote, and to be reſponſible to his country for the part he takes on this moſt important and alarming ſubject.

Mr. Stanley ſaid, if this Bill paſſed into a law we were upon the eve of a revolution. He was aſtoniſhed that Miniſters ſhould be ſo blind as to adopt ſuch a meaſure. He predicted the worſt effects to the country ſhould the Bill unfortunately be carried into force as a law: opinion he compared, when controled, to a ſubterranean fire, which operates ſilently and burſts ſuddenly, with effects too fatal to be mitigated or reſiſted: men are not ſo blind, he ſaid, if laws are properly adminiſtered, and their happineſs even partially ſecured, to fly in the face of evil, and riſque all the dangers and inſecurity conſequent to public diſorder. An author of the firſt eminence, (Monteſquieu) had aſſerted, that the ſureſt proof of a country's verging on deſtruction is an enormous encreaſe of penal laws; that opinion he alſo profeſſed himſelf to hold; and on that ground alone, if there were not numerous others more powerful, he ſhould oppoſe the Bill. The exiſting laws were, he thought, every way ſufficient to arm the magiſtrate with proper power for the ſuppreſſion of all illegal meetings. Did Miniſters imagine they lived in the midſt of people hoſtile to the conſtitution? What were the laws for the puniſhment of miſdemeanors; were they not adequate?

Why

Why ſhould laws, he aſked, be brought in to authorize the magiſtrates attendance at public meetings? Do they not attend? Can they not, as Engliſhmen, attend and diſcuſs, and declare, their free opinions on any ſubjects propounded at any public meetings? Is it not their duty, not indeed as ſpies, or agents of corruption, but as free and liberal men, who go not with a view to conſtrue all they hear into ſedition, but to hear and be diſpaſſionate. Mr. Stanley adverted to a Bill which Mr. Alderman Luſhington intended to introduce into the city of London, and accuſed the worthy Alderman of wiſhing to deprive his fellow-citizens of the trial by jury. Mr. Stanley conſidered the preſent Bill as a libel on the loyalty of Engliſhmen, and concluded with declaring his affection for that conſtitution which he had been taught from his earlieſt infancy to admire, and which he now feared was about to be ſubverted; a meaſure which would make him abhor the authors of it for the remainder of his life.

Sir William Pulteney ſaid, it was the duty of every gentleman to conſider how far the liberty of the conſtitution was infringed by ſuch a Bill. The greateſt jealouſy, he admitted, ought to exiſt in the minds of the people at any infringement of their privileges: but gentlemen would do well to try, whether this conſequence would attend the preſent meaſure, before they gave it a bad colour with the public, by declaiming againſt it as a ſurrender of the conſtitution. The Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had ſpoken warmly on the ſubject, but he was glad to hear him; as a meaſure of ſuch importance ought to be adopted with the utmoſt caution. If a right meaſure, the ſooner it was adopted the better, becauſe the ſooner it would prevent the evil from ſpreading. Sir William agreed with gentlemen that the meaſure would militate againſt liberty, if it prevented free diſcuſſion: but if ſuch aſſemblies as thoſe in queſtion were ſuppreſſed, he begged to know, whether the liberty of the preſs would not continue to exiſt in all its force? That was a mode of diſcuſſing all popular and political topics, that he thought adequate to all the purpoſes of the community; and which he ſhould be ſorry to ſee ſurrendered. That alone was ſufficient to maintain all the bleſſings of the people; and that could not exiſt in a Republican form of Government, in an abſolute Monarchy, or any ſort of Government which he knew, except a limited Monarchy, ſuch as we happily enjoyed. In ſuch inflammatory aſſemblies as thoſe in queſtion, where ſedition was copiouſly dealt out to the multitude, there ought to be ſomething to ſave the public mind from imbibing the inſidious poiſon. The great danger of ſuch meetings was, that they only heard one ſide

 of

of a queſtion, and their ignorance and want of information led them on to action, without conſidering what might be ſaid on the other ſide; it was very fit, therefore, that they ſhould be ſet right on ſuch points.

As for his part, he ſaw no harm or injury to the ſtate from paſſing ſuch a meaſure as the preſent: but if, in the future ſtages of the Bill, it ſhould be found hoſtile to the conſtitution and liberty of the ſubject, it might be expoſed and be hindered from paſſing into a law. However, there could be no harm in conſidering the proviſions of the Bill; and, if it ſhould be found a prevention for the evil complained of, and diſadvantage to the conſtitution, it could not, and it ought not, to be oppoſed. The regulations of policy and law ought to be ſuited to circumſtances and times; at one time he obſerved a people might be too raſh, as in the preſent inſtance; at another, too ſluggiſh; it was then the buſineſs of legiſlators to apply their remedy to the occaſion. A Right Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox) ſaid, that ſuch a meaſure never was reſorted to in any free country, as empowered the magiſtrate to regulate popular aſſemblies: but he wiſhed to ſet the Right Hon. Gentleman right. No aſſembly, no meeting of the people, could be held in America, with all its boaſted liberty, without the preſence of the magiſtrate. This, gentlemen would ſee, was very neceſſary; becauſe, if a perſon who wiſhed to ſpeak againſt the queſtion of ſuch a meeting, dared to expreſs his ſentiments, he would be torn to pieces. It was then proper that a power be given to the magiſtrate to ſet ſuch aſſemblies to rights; if treaſonable proceedings were the avowed intention of any bodies of men, treaſon ought not to be tamely ſuffered in this or any country. If the magiſtrate, he obſerved, exceeded his powers, no doubt, the aggrieved party, by reſorting to the Court of King's-bench, would find ample redreſs, and able advocates, when ſuch brilliant talents were exerted againſt the meaſure in queſtion. There was no fear in a country where every man was free to publiſh his ſentiments and opinions, and where juries were the judges, whether any publication was a libel or not, that liberty would be ſurrendered: but then, if treaſon and ſedition were afloat, no one would deny, the current ought to be ſtopped; and if the laws already in force were found inadequate to effect this, it was equally clear and undeniable, that ſome regulation ought to be made to ſave every thing dear to Engliſhmen. He therefore ſhould give his ſupport to the Bill, becauſe he thought it would prove a remedy to an evil, without infringing the rights and liberties of the ſubject.

Mr.

Mr. N. B. Halhed ſaid, Mr. Speaker, there are circumſtances, under which no unwillingneſs of public ſpeaking, no conſciouſneſs of ſlender abilities, will authorize a perſeverance in taciturnity: when a town is beſieged, the moſt peaceable inhabitant muſt occaſionally handle the muſquet, or line the battery. I am the laſt man who would wiſh to preſs myſelf forward on the notice of the Houſe, or take an oſtenſible part in the buſineſs of the day. Educated in the moſt loyal principles of love for the conſtitution and reſpect for the Crown, I have hitherto contented myſelf in the ſilent enjoyment of the ineſtimable privileges of a free-born Engliſhman, and a warrantable hope that I ſhould preſerve them undiminiſhed to my lateſt hour.

The continuance of thoſe hopes, and of that enjoyment, is ſo inſeparably linked with the queſtion actually before the Houſe, that I am perſuaded our reſolution of this day will, in one way or the other, decide upon them for ever. I have therefore applied myſelf with all the diligence I am capable of to the conſideration of the ſubject of our preſent debate, and I hope Gentlemen will do me the juſtice to acknowledge, that however deficient my capacity, there is not one member of this Houſe who has better pretenſions for impartiality at leaſt of judgment in a compleat ſeparation from all party attachment, and a diſavowal of all political connections whatever than myſelf. I differed indeed laſt Spring, and do ſtill moſt decidedly differ with the majority of this Houſe on the ſubject of the war: but there I ſtop. In no one inſtance have I formed new attachments, or forſaken my former private friendſhip, in conſequence of this change in my opinions; and I am now ready, and I hope I ſhall ever preſerve that readineſs, to vote and to divide with either ſide of the Houſe, on which reaſonableneſs and juſtice ſhall appear to me to preponderate.

In order, Sir, to form ſomething of a clear and conſiſtent opinion of the nature and circumſtances of the buſineſs of this day, it will not be altogether nugatory to take into conſideration a diſtinct ſtatement of the facts that have led to the meaſures now propoſed.

On the 29th of October, his Majeſty coming in ſtate to open the Parliament, was aſſaulted by ſome one or other among a mixed and prodigious crowd, who threw a ſtone, which broke a window of the carriage; and certainly endangered the life of the Sovereign. There cannot be any man in the whole kingdom more ready than myſelf, to acknowledge the atrocity of this act, and to conſign the authors or abettors of it to the moſt rigorous puniſhment of the law. I was, therefore, exceedingly well ſatisfied, when I ſaw a Proclamation, iſſued by the Privy Council, offering an immenſe,

 but

but not unfit reward, for the discovery of the offender. I was still more satisfied when, by a second Proclamation from an office of police, I had reason to suppose, that this wretch, though not actually discovered, was at least accurately identified.

If it had been declared upon oath, that a dirty looking fellow, like an ostler, had been seen to throw a stone at the carriage, and that persons had been heard afterwards to compliment him on his dexterity—Here one would think every thing that vigilance for the public weal, or concern for the life of the Monarch could suggest, would have concentrated all its efforts. The discovery of a shabby ostler, and a coachman out of place (however cautiously they may be concealed) will hardly appear of any considerable difficulty to any man who considers the present accuracy of intelligence, both in Government offices, and in those of the police.—Nor can it be seriously a matter of doubt, but that if these people were discovered, their plot, if it were a plot, would necessarily be laid open and disconcerted; and their accomplices, if they had any, share the same fate with themselves. But at all events with this clue, leading to a knowledge of the whole state of the case, I put it now home to every gentleman's breast, whether it was not more reasonable, more natural, and more consonant to justice, to pursue that investigation upon the grounds of this information upon oath, than to turn shortly round into a totally new path of research, and shift the suspicion to a totally different quarter.

I must confess, therefore, Sir, that when I saw the third Proclamation, that which is now the object of our discussion, I was most exceedingly surprised and alarmed. For what is the coincidence of facts on which the circumstances alluded to are affirmed to assimilate—none upon earth that I can see, but a mere proximity of date. A riotous and starving mob insult his Majesty, and appear even to aim at his life on a certain day—a mob, evidently exasperated by personal sufferings of the severest nature, calling to the common Father of his people for peace and bread; and on the day before, a peaceably assembly of persons, who are not said or supposed to be in a state of actual necessity, and whose behaviour was in every respect most tranquil and exemplary, had convened to deliberate on the means of legally restoring their political rights.

There is not the slightest symptom of union either in the principles or objects of the two assemblies, or is it by the most distant hint insinuated that this dirty-looking ostler or coachman out of place had been seen at the meeting near Copenhagen-house. But it may be said, this meeting was nevertheless dangerous, by in-

ſtilling ſeditious or treaſonable notions into the brains of an undiſtinguiſhing multitude, and ſo ſideways, giving encouragement to the blow that was actually ſtricken. I aſk, is there any proof of this? is there any ground for aſſuming it? Is it the firſt time ſuch an aſſembly has been collected under the orators of this aſſembly, to have diſſeminated, as it is urged, ſuch dangerous doctrines totally unknown, or if known, have the exiſting laws been put in force to bring them to juſtice? Nothing of the kind. Other aſſemblies have been previouſly holden on the very ſame ſubject. The ſame orators, whoſe names are probably familiar to every member of this Houſe, have broached the ſame ſentiments at thoſe meetings, and their ſpeeches have been every where publiſhed and circulated, without a ſingle animadverſion from any of the law officers of the Crown.

This, Sir, appears at the firſt bluſh ſo ſingular a buſineſs, that I think it will not be amiſs, if we analyze it up as far as we can go. We muſt then obſerve, that the grievance complained of by thoſe againſt whom the preſent Proclamation is immediately directed, are ſuch as have been attributed to the want of a Reform in Parliament: they are ſuch, as preſſing with extraordinary weight on the bulk of the nation towards the cloſe of a former moſt calamitous war, naturally connected the idea of returning peace with that of an improved repreſentation of the country. And certain very able and diſtinguiſhed characters of thoſe days ſo clearly exhibited the connexion between the profitable abuſes of war on the one hand, and the relaxed ſtate of parliamentary independence on the other, that by vigour and perſeverance they at length drove the war-miniſtry from their ſeats, and ſet up an adminiſtration of their own on the baſis of peace and reform. Far be it from me to deny that they continued to feel in office the ſentiments they had profeſſed on coming into power, or to ſuſpect that they did not deprecate that ſyſtem of hoſtility, which had been found ſo convenient to the profuſion of their predeceſſors.

But accidents will derange the beſt-concerted plans; and though they had the ſkill to evade actual warfare, they could not well avoid certain incidental armaments, which adminiſtered a momentary gloſs to the languiſhing war eſtabliſhment. At laſt, Sir, the neceſſity of a real and complete war, with all its train of inevitable extravagance, and official emolument, was fairly preſurmiſed—and then—then it was natural to look back with ſome anxiety at the circumſtances under which their predeceſſors in office had retired, and themſelves acceded to poſſeſſion. I am but ſpeaking the language of plain reaſon and ordinary common ſenſe, when

when I assert, that if in one instance the plan for immediate peace and Parliamentary Reform had triumphed over an administration professing diametrically opposite principles—the same means might be apprehended, as again likely to produce similar effects; and therefore it may certainly be deemed no more than mere prudence and self-defence in those who were about to adopt the very measures they had formerly reprobated, to lay every possible impediment in the way of a similar attack upon themselves. Considering the matter in this point of view, I have no hesitation whatever in declaring, that the alarm so industriously spread in the latter end of 1792, against the different societies linked together for the purpose of procuring Parliamentary Reform, was perfectly wise, consistent, and natural. The method of calling out the militia at a most unusual season, of apprehending sundry persons, and seizing a voluminous mass of papers, with all the well-assumed trepidation of an immediate death-blow meditated against the constitution, was admirably well calculated to annihilate the most distant hopes of these societies in future, and commence a reign of terror which no succeeding opposition would have been able to shake. The means were ostensibly adequate to the end proposed; and the precipitation with which the act of Habeas Corpus was suspended, shewed the extreme eagerness of the parties to take advantage of the momentary paralysis of public opinion. What followed? After a long lapse of time, the persons originally confined were brought to their trial, under such peculiar circumstances of hardship, both as to the astonishing number of witnesses subpœnaed against them, and the unheard of phalanx of professional men, drawn up in array, at the bar, that, I think, hardly any thing similar can be found in the annals of mankind.

I say, and I am sure many Gentlemen who now hear me can testify to my veracity, if they please, that even before trial these wretched victims were exultingly condemned to the gallows. That the assurance of their fate was in certain quarters perfectly proverbial; and I now declare my opinion as an honest and independant man, that if those persons had then suffered, not one of us now alive should ever have seen the rights of Habeas Corpus restored to this country. Nothing would have been required to keep up a perpetual necessity for the suspension, but the sacrifice of a dozen or two of miserable wretches once in a year, to exaggerate suspicions of treason; a precedent would have been established (and who so fond of precedents as our courts of justice) for their condemnation, and in no very long period, popular prejudice might have gone hand and hand with the verdict. Thank God, the integrity

tegrity of a jury impannelled in the metropolis, in the very vortex of minifterial influence, fuddenly difperfed the tremendous cloud, and left nothing for minifters but the miferable fhift of the poffibility of an exifting confpiracy without *confpirators*. By this time the projected war was in full effect, and any one who will be at the trouble to trace with accuracy the circumftances of which I have juft fketched a rapid outline, will clearly difcern from the very nature of the cafe, as well as the opportunity taken for this tranfaction, that it was planned for the very purpofe of infuring to adminiftration an undifturbed career in the profecution of hoftilities. I affume it as a matter of fact, which every man may verify if he pleafes.

The failure of the project, therefore, as it was moft exceedingly mortifying to its projectors, muft be expected in the fame degree to have given courage and exultation to its opponents; for which reafon we ought then to have perceived the immediate operation and effect in the conduct of the parties and their affociates, of all thofe dangerous and deftructive defigns, of which they had been fo loudly accufed. What *was the fact?* Tranquillity in the extreme, a general fubmiffion to the laws, and a temporary fufpenfion even of the moft legal exertions of the focieties for a Parliamentary Reform, in favour of the vigour and unanimity required for the conducting the war; accordingly this war went on and went on, like that former war, the oppofition to which had been fo advantageous to the conductors of the prefent. Calamities poured in upon calamities, expences were multiplied upon expences; all the floodgates of profufion in fubfidies, loans, and all the endlefs etceteras of minifterial dilapidation were thrown open, and it became again too apparent, that no remedy fhort of a Parliamentary Reform could poffibly reach the enormous evil; and this brings us, Sir, to the moment of the Proclamation now on the table. We have feen that an attempt to produce a complete annihilation of the focieties, by an attack upon the lives of fome of their prominent members, had failed. It is neceffary therefore, now to change the mode of proceeding, and by one blow to quafh the very exiftence not only of all thefe exifting focieties, but even the poffibility of any fuch fociety ever exifting at all —and the time chofen for this operation is of itfelf fufficient, in my mind, to warrant the inference I now draw. The Houfe will pleafe to confider how very near we are fuppofed to be to a diffolution of Parliament, and upon that ground, paufe a moment, to reflect in what fituation every man will ftand who fhall not ftart as a minifterial candidate at the general election. Sir, upon this head but to have dropped a hint is fully fufficient. I affirm that the

present Miniftry, by a Bill founded on this Proclamation, will have the effectual controul over all the electors of Great Britain univerfally, and no man can poffibly expect to be returned but on minifterial intereft.

And now, Sir, to come to the Proclamation itfelf, for aught I can fee, every one of its fentences is a mere affumption of fact without any proof whatever. Will the Houfe admit upon this fingle authority, that inflammatory and feditious fpeeches have been delivered at the meeting alluded to, without any formal teftimony adduced for it? Shall we without any evidence whatever conclude, that becaufe it is notorious that one man in a tumultuous affembly has thrown a ftone at the King's coach, many thoufands of men who met quietly and decently the day before are complicated in the tranfaction? Are we not in full poffeffion of an acknowledgment from the Crown itfelf, that under an extreme preffure of diftrefs, obedience to the laws has been fo general as to deferve its particular notice, and violated only in a few inftances? Shall we not be permitted to afk, why iffue fuch a Proclamation if it be infufficient, and if fufficient, why back it with an Act of Parliament? Shall we not call for a lift of all thofe juftices of the peace and others, to whom the Proclamation is addreffed, that we may judge for ourfelves, whether or not they are now competent to the duty without farther aid? Shall we not, at all events, demand a call of the Houfe, that on a cafe of fuch magnitude, in which the whole fabric of our conftitution, as fettled in 1688 is in danger. Every fingle member may be well apprifed of the circumftances under which his own liberty and that of his conftituents, of the whole nation, and of all their pofterity, is to be done away for ever? Surely, Sir, if ever there was a time when procraftination was a virtue, it is now: and as I have fo long trefpaffed on the patience of the Houfe, I fhall fit down under the fatisfactory conviction, that I have not in fo critical a period fhrunk from that duty, which on lefs important occafions I fhould have been much better pleafed to elude.

Mr. Maurice Robinson faid, he had that night heard from an Honourable Baronet, a fophifticated explanation of the nature of the Bill, a circuitous effort to confound its object and effect, infinitely more infidious and to be alarmed at, than at the fort of pretext of neceffity which the Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer had boldly and undifguifedly alledged. From the fophiftry of the Honourable Baronet, he collected that the people would have a right to read, but not to fpeak complaints againft the burthens they endured. The interefts of the Sovereign were oppofed to thofe of the people, whereas he had always heard that the

the Sovereign was the third branch of the legiſlature, and was bound to underſtand the democratical intereſts as much as his own. The Bill, they were told, went to impeach the loyalty of the people, who, except a few indeed, had conſtantly ſhewn their veneration for the Sovereign; and he would aſſert, that never had King afforded more trying ſituations for the loyalty of the ſubject to be manifeſted in, nor experienced ſtronger inſtances of their love and attachment. Mr. Robinſon ſaid, he was not aſtoniſhed at the want of manifeſtations to ſupport the bold aſſertions of Miniſters. The Romans, he obſerved, felt no ſurpriſe when Caligula made his horſe a conſul, becauſe his antecedent conduct would have juſtified any extreme of deſpotiſm, however abſurd, but he did not pretend that his horſe was a Roman ſenator. Mr. Robinſon adverted to the nature of the propoſed interference of the magiſtrates, deprecating it as an arbitrary meaſure. He alſo pointedly alluded to a member of that Houſe, a magiſtrate of the City of London, who had propoſed a Bill, the effect of which would be to aboliſh juries, or at leaſt much diminiſh the benefit of trial by jury in the City of London. He concluded by an appeal to the honour and dignity of the Repreſentatives of the people, which ought to ſtimulate them to reſiſt a Bill, which he could conſider in no other light than as an execrable compound of oppreſſion and folly.

Mr. Alderman Lushington ſaid, notwithſtanding the conſiderable part which an honourable gentleman had aſſigned to him in the ſubverſion of the liberties of his country, and more particularly thoſe of his fellow citizens, he roſe thus early in the debate to ſay, that he ſhould ſoon have an opportunity of bringing forward that Bill, to which the Honourable Member alluded, *viz.* the Bill for regulating the trial by jury; when the meaſure came to be debated, it would be aſcertained whether the attack that had been made upon him reſpecting it, was warranted or not. When he conſidered the very bold and daring attack that had been made on the ſacred perſon of his Majeſty, and the various poſſible miſchiefs attendant on that event:—when he conſidered the bold and tumultuous meetings that had taken place both in the metropolis, and at no great diſtance from it, and that if the deſign on our moſt gracious Sovereign was not there projected, it was certainly encouraged by theſe meetings: when he looked at that bold attack, not ſolely againſt the perſon of the King, but againſt the whole Conſtitution, he thought the ſtrong meaſures of the Right Honourable Gentleman neceſſary for the preſervation of the conſtitution. He was willing to give credit to his anceſtors for having acted with a due degree of wiſdom, but he would not ſuffer that underſtanding,

which

which the Almighty had given him as the guide of his conduct, to be locked up and fettered by what they had done. The Omnipotent had given him an underſtanding to be uſed and exerciſed, and it was the duty of every man to think for himſelf, and to act as he thought beſt for his own advantage. He thought the ſtate of the country in the time of Charles I. and at preſent was totally different. If a negative was put on this Bill, he would venture to ſay, that not only every man in that Houſe, but millions without the Houſe, would feel in common with them, and would lament the day when they rejected this Bill, which was founded in wiſdom; he would not ſay it would be applicable under any circumſtances, but in the preſent ſtate of the country, that he was perfectly certain when a new ſet of principles were afloat, which would overturn the government of Europe, if they were not reſtrained, if this Bill, or ſome meaſure ſimilar to it was not adopted, the Right Honourble Gentleman (Mr. Fox) would not long have an opportunity of exerciſing his brilliant talents for the good of the country. This, many in that Houſe, and millions out of it were aware of.

The Alderman took notice of the expreſſions of Mr. Fox relative to the rights of man, and ſaid, he had no doubt but the Right Honourable Gentleman was aware of the rights of ſocial compact. Indeed he was perſuaded he could not, in this enlightened moment, mean to allude to the rights of nature in oppoſition to civilization and ſubordination. Before Mr. Luſhington concluded, he obſerved that magiſtrates were called to exerciſe the authority of the State, where not merely political but conſtitutional ſubjects were diſcuſſed, and if they interpoſed that authority in an undue and unconſtitutional manner, there were many able and willing to bring them to juſtice, and aſſert the liberty of the people.

Mr. Curwen declared, he felt it his duty to expreſs his ſentiments on this occaſion. No man more deprecated the idea of an attack upon the Sovereign than he did; and he never contemplated any thing with more abhorrence than that attack, except the glaring attempt which was that evening made under the ſanction of the royal name, to deprive the ſubject of his laſt, beſt, and deareſt privilege. If any thing could endanger the perſon of his Majeſty, it would, in his judgment, be that Bill. With the privilege of a free diſcuſſion on the defects of their government, the proceedings of Miniſters, and the conduct of their repreſentatives, the people of this realm were never obliged to recur to acts of violence to obtain a redreſs of their grievances, and hence aroſe the ſecurity of their Sovereigns. It was true that the Right Honourable Gentleman had ſufficient cauſe to ſuppreſs the voice of the

people;

people; for no man had ever ſuffered more mortifications from it than himſelf. What was it that put a ſtop to the Ruſſian war? Not the majority of that Houſe, but the voice of the people. What was it that put a ſtop to the Spaniſh armament? Not the majority of that Houſe, but the voice of the people. To preſerve this voice inviolate he would riſk his life and property; and it was indifferent to him, if the Bill ſhould paſs, whether the conſtitution was deſtroyed by deſpotiſm, or an inſurrection of the people. He could only attribute this Bill to the convenience of Miniſters, who wiſhed to put a ſtop to the progreſs of complaints againſt them to the Throne; and as an argument in ſupport of this aſſertion, requeſted that part of his Majeſty's Speech to be read which ſpoke of the general moderation and good behaviour of the people; yet after this had been pronounced by his Majeſty to both Houſes of Parliament, they were called upon to vote for a Bill, which, even in a limited and moderate extent, no Miniſter had before preſumed to bring forward. He truſted the Houſe would not—dared not let it paſs; if they had the feelings of Engliſhmen, he was perſuaded they would not, ſure he was that the country had only to be appriſed of its danger, and it never would paſs.

Mr. Wilberforce began by declaring, that the preſent period and occaſion were ſuch as rendered it the duty of every public man to declare his ſentiments, and it was more eſpecially incumbent on thoſe, who like himſelf diſclaimed the idea of party connexion. He had liſtened with attention to his Right Honourable Friend's opening; and although he certainly did not mean to pledge himſelf with regard to the particular proviſions of the Bill which was about to be brought forward, he approved of the general principle of the meaſure, and, ſo approving, he was not to be deterred from the frank avowal of his opinion, by the lofty tones and violent epithets of the Honourable Gentleman oppoſite to him.

He begged the Houſe to take a fair and conſiderate review of all that had paſſed relative to the ſubject before them for the laſt three years: ſo long it was ſince attempts had been making by every ſpecies of art and induſtry to poiſon the minds of this country, to inſtil into them falſe jealouſies and ſuſpicions, and to excite a contempt for the Britiſh conſtitution, and an attachment to thoſe falſe principles of liberty which had produced ſuch extenſive miſchiefs in a neighbouring country; nor was it only French politics which they were importing into this country, but French philoſophy alſo; in the numerous publications by which their opinions were diſſeminated, there was a marked contempt for every thing ſacred, anavowed oppoſition to the religion, as well as to the conſti-

tution

tution of Great Britain. Various means had been taken to put a ftop to thefe proceedings, but in vain; thefe bad men feemed to redouble their efforts, and to prefs forward with increafed audacioufnefs. Lectures were given, and harangues delivered, of the moft feditious and inflammatory nature; hand-bills and prints of the moft atrocious defcription were circulated. That all this had not been without effect, was but too manifeft from thofe daring infults on the perfon of his Majefty, more and greater than had come under public difcuffion, which had excited fuch general indignation and abhorrence. What then was to be done? Were thefe men to be fuffered to go on without difturbance? It was a queftion which deferved the rather to be afked, becaufe there was manifeftly a fyftematic principle, a confiftency and unformity in their meafures which plainly evinced a deliberate and digefted plan of conduct. Were they to be permitted to purfue in all our great manufacturing towns, what they had begun in more than one of them, that fame fyftem of popular affemblies, and debating clubs, and feditious harangues, which they had introduced into the capital. How could this end? who would venture to foretel the confequences? Surely it was high time for Parliament to interfere, in order to ftop the progrefs of this growing mifchief; and he thought Adminiftration deferved the thanks of their country for making the attempt, in fpite of all the clamour they muft expect to raife amongft thofe who harbour thefe bad defigns, and amongft others in that Houfe, whom he had obferved with forrow, to be too ready to lend their countenance to them.

The meafure of his Right Honourable Friend divided itfelf into two parts, that which refpected the greater popular affemblies, and that which refpected the fmaller focieties and clubs. With regard to the former, he conceived it was by no means meant to lay any reftraint on the conftitutional modes of difcuffing public queftions, and ftating, and obtaining redrefs for national grievances; all that was defigned was, to prevent the mifchiefs likely to refult from tumultuous affemblies, and that furely in the moft unexceptionable way, by bringing them more under the cognizance of the laws, and putting the magiftrates into a capacity of difcharging that duty, in the execution of which, difficulties were now thrown in his way, which rendered the exercife of it almoft impracticable. The grand conftitutional organs by which the wifdom of their forefathers had provided for the difcuffion of political queftions, and the expreffing to Parliament of the national will, were to remain untouched; he might rather fay, that they would acquire new life and vigour when thofe affemblies fhould be brought under regu-

lation,

lation, which had encroached on their province and uſurped their powers. He was ready, however, to confeſs, that it was not willingly that he reſorted to this Bill; all that was left to him was a choice of difficulties; it was the condition of human nature, and no where ſo true as in politics, that it was almoſt impoſſible to obtain any great good without the ſacrifice of ſome oppoſite advantages, or the riſk of poſſible evil, yet on the whole he muſt declare, that fairly eſtimating the advantages and diſadvantages likely to reſult from the meaſure in queſtion, he could not heſitate to which ſide of the alternative to give the preference.

The ſecond part of the Bill reſpected the ſeditious clubs and debating ſocieties, and this part of the caſe was to him ſtill clearer than the other. Concerning theſe, he thought there could hardly be two opinions; they might do much harm, they could do no good. The cauſe of truth and of fair diſcuſſion were not promoted by theſe aſſemblies; on the contrary, they were the ſure parents of falſhood, prejudice, and paſſion. But a Right Honourable Gentleman oppoſite him had defended them on the ground of their being neceſſary, as vents through which the humours of the body politic were to be ſuffered to paſs without reſtraint: this was the very ground on which he wiſhed to reſt the queſtion, and the rather becauſe the very inſtances which the Right Honourable Gentleman had urged in behalf of his opinions, afforded additional confirmation to his own. Was it by ſeditious clubs and debating ſocieties, ſaid the Right Honourable Gentleman, that the old Government of France had been deſtroyed? Was it by ſeditious clubs and debating ſocieties that the monarchy was ſubverted in our own country in the time of Charles I.? Had not both Louis XVI. and Charles I. attempted to ſtifle and ſuppreſs theſe and other means by which the public diſcontents were ſuppoſed to be excited? Mr. Wilberforce ſaid, he had always conſidered it as the grand preſervative of the Britiſh conſtitution that there was a popular aſſembly, the Houſe of Commons, in which all popular grievances might be freely and ſafely diſcuſſed, to which the people might be encouraged without fear to bring their complaints, wherein they might be ſure there would never be wanting thoſe who would ſtand forth to aſſert the cauſe of the injured or oppreſſed; here, in ſhort, all the national humour might be ſuffered to ferment without danger, he muſt therefore aſk the Right Honourable Gentleman, Was there any thing of this kind in the conſtitution of France? Was it not actually for want of ſome ſuch proviſion that the national diſcontents, long working ſecretly, burſt forth

at

at length like a torrent, with the greater violence from its having been so long repressed. Again, might not all Charles the First's subsequent misfortunes be traced to the discontinuance of Parliaments for eleven years together, by which a similar effect had been produced in England? The application was obvious, and it was not necessary for him to take up any more of their time in enforcing a truth, which would be disputed by none who understood the British constitution.

But the Right Honourable Gentleman had declared without reserve, that if the Bill should pass, there would be a total abrogation of all the liberties of the country. This was in part answered by an Honourable Gentleman who, opposing the Bill with equal violence, had declared that he hoped or believed, that if the Bill should pass the people would resist it. He was sure the Honourable Gentleman could not mean they would resist it by force; all he could design was, that the people, if it should pass, would universally exercise their just right of petitioning against it, and that the public voice, when expressed loudly and unanimously, would procure its repeal. But when it was so confidently asserted, that with these clubs and societies, the national liberties would expire, he must ask, in his turn, where were the national liberties before those clubs and assemblies existed, which were but of late origin? But it had been urged, we were accusing the people of England in general of disaffection; nothing could be farther from the truth. Had this been actually the fact, we should now have been too late with our preventative remedy; but, in truth, this was the exact time to interfere, before the poison had generally diffused itself: and when there was a number of active and dangerous men who were endeavouring every where to diffuse this destructive venom.

On the whole, Mr. Wilberforce said, his judgment was decidedly in favour of the general measure. And he could most solemnly declare it, as his conscientious opinion, that in voting for this measure, subject to such improvements as it would receive in the Committee, he should invigorate the stamina of the British constitution. He saw the clamours that it would be endeavoured to excite, but he regarded them not. He considered himself not merely as asserting the cause of the monarchical or aristocratical part of the constitution, but that of the people of England, whose rights he was guarding, whose liberties he was preserving, whose happiness he was promoting, determined to use his utmost efforts that the constitution which, through the blessing of Providence, they had received from their forefathers, might be handed down unimpaired to their posterity.

 Mr.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, he had heard with more concern than ſurpriſe the approbation of the Honourable Gentleman to the motion of that evening. At one time he had been inclined to augur good from the perſevering ſilence of the Right Honourable Gentleman, though he could ſcarcely reconcile it with his attachment to his Right Honourable Friend, and what was ſtill dearer, the ties of official connection. He really thought, however, that the Right Honourable Gentleman who introduced the motion had been ſtruck dumb with ſhame. Gentlemen might laugh at this idea, as it was very unuſual for the Right Honourable Gentleman to be aſhamed of any thing, but from the ſtrong and irreſiſtible arguments urged by his Right Honourable Friend, (*Mr. Fox*) againſt the nature and dangerous tendency of the Bill in queſtion, he did hope that they would have produced ſomething like contrition, and the abandonment of his project. He at leaſt hoped that the Right Honourable Gentleman would be convinced that the meaſures he had reſorted to were too ſtrong for the neceſſity, and that he would have withdrawn his motion to conſult upon ſome leſs irritating plan.

The Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt agreed to the meaſure, becauſe he was deſirous of handing down the liberties we enjoy unimpaired to poſterity. He had unfortunately to remark, that the Bill in queſtion was one of the firſt to deſtroy thoſe liberties, inaſmuch as it makes a direct attack upon the fifth article of the Bill of Rights, which confirms the right of petitioning. He differed alſo with the Honourable Gentleman in his idea of a conſpiracy, when he inſinuated as an argument that the general ſpirit of diſaffection had encreaſed, was encreaſing, and ought to be diminiſhed. Did he mean to aſſert that it reigned more dangerouſly now than it did at the commencement of the war? If he did mean ſo, then it was evident that the Miniſters put a direct falſehood into his Majeſty's mouth, as he had expreſſed his ſatisfaction at our improved ſituation, part of which was attributed to the returning loyalty of his ſubjects. If they doubted this, why was there not a propoſition for the further ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act? If they did not doubt it, then it was plain that they had been miſtaken; that their coercive meaſures had failed, and that the ſpirit of diſaffection was not quelled. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Jenkinſon) had aſſerted at the opening of the Seſſion, that one bleſſed conſequence ariſing from the proſecution of the war was, that it had eradicated French principles; it now appeared that this aſſertion was erroneous, and that after a year

of

of famine, and another approaching, these principles were more and more extended.

The Honourable Gentleman had asked, what were our liberties before the formation of clubs, which he believed to be of novel existence?—He would remind him, that since the Revolution, clubs had always existed in a greater or less degree; and that the Hon. Gentleman himself had of late years belonged to almost every one of them; but unhappily there were such frequent instances of short memory in the Right Hon. Gentleman opposite, that he was not surprised to find his colleagues had caught the contagion. He asked the Hon. Gentleman, whether he had forgot that he was one of those persons who had formerly associated for a Parliamentary Reform? Whether he had forgot his associations in Yorkshire, and against that India Bill, which he now, with many other persons who formerly opposed it, as strenuously supported? Whether he forgot his association for the abolition of the slave trade, which he was sorry to say had not yet been carried into effect; and whether without association, he should have been able to have done what he did?

He reminded an Honourable Magistrate (Mr. Alderman Lushington) who had declaimed against reformers, and protested against locking up his intellects in a strong box, in deference to his great grandfather, that he had also once been an advocate for Parliamentary Reform, and as he thought that at Copenhagen-house the attendance of a magistrate was essential, so Mr. Sheridan thought that the attendance of the Honourable Gentleman in future with the Friends of the People, which was a name he had probably an aversion to now, would be of very great advantage, as they should not only have the attendance of a very zealous reformer, but a magistrate in the same person, only they might wish to dispense with his bevy of constables.

Another gentleman, (Sir William Pulteney), had treated the subject with levity by observing, that in America it was usual for a magistrate to attend every public assembly, by way of letting the people know both sides of the question, and setting them to rights. Hence it was clear, that in England, his worship was not to be appointed to attend all public meetings so much to take up the orators, as *to take up their argument*. According to this mode of reasoning, our liberties were to be preserved by consummate arguers and logical magistrates. He desired the House however to recollect what the magistrates are in Westminster; for instance, who are to be entrusted with this authority? They are not like the gentlemen of that House, of independent fortunes, and admi-

nistering

niftering juftice gratuitoufly on their own eftates, but paid creatures, penfioners, and dependents on Minifters. He recollected on a former day when the propriety of entrufting power to the difcretion of fuch place-hunters was difcuffed, that the Right Honourable Secretary at War was a moft violent oppofer of throwing fo much authority into the hands of venal dependents. Then what is to be done to render them fit for their offices? Firft you muft give them independence, then integrity, and laftly talents, or they will never be able to difcriminate. Let us confider alfo how they are to be attended. If any one of the orators in the heat of his argument fhould ufe a feditious word, or one which the magiftrate conftrues to be fo, if he fhould be tenacious, and not immediately defift when defired fo to do, the riot act is to be read, and followed by military execution. He remarked that reformers in general were not very ready to attend to a gentle hint, and here there was but one alternative, for if the magiftrate did not find him paffive and obedient, when fetting him to rights, he was to knock him down. The Honourable Baronet, as a remedy for any abufe in this authority, had ftated that the magiftrate was amenable to the laws, but furely he had not thought of the expence or inconvenience attending fuch a remedy, or he could not have mentioned it. To fatisfy the members of the meeting too, if their intentions and behaviour were adjudged to be peaceable, and not to complain of Minifters or their meafures, they might call another meeting another day. Here was more trouble and inconvenience. Befides, how many magiftrates were to be employed to difperfe a large affembly? He fuppofed they were to be procured, as, to the great fhame of this country, army furgeons had been, by advertifement, and we might fhortly expect to read in the public papers, "Wanted an immenfe number of magiftrates, to prevent the diffemination of feditious doctrines, and fet the people to rights."

At this rate not a refpectable and independent man in England would be found in the magiftracy, but afhamed of having their names feen there, would refign the Bench to a fet of hired venal dependents.

With regard to the affault upon his Majefty, he was totally ignorant of it on the evening it happened, and when he entered the Houfe, had heard of nothing except fome clamours. But he hoped he might yet fpeak freely, and he did then in his foul and confcience believe, that all the tumults had been raifed by that immenfe army of fpies, which had been difbanded. When they found that the Habeas Corpus act was no longer fufpended, that no atrocious acts had been committed, that his Majefty had ex-

 preffed

preſſed his ſatisfaction at the returning loyalty of the people, and that it had been declared in that Houſe, that French principles were eradicated by the poor having no means of ſubſiſtence, and conſcious that any violence on their part would not be ungrateful to Miniſters, ſo long as it furniſhed them with a handle to lop away the liberties of the country, it is but natural to ſuppoſe that they committed the outrage which they have induſtriouſly attributed to others. He concluded by declaring he hoped the Houſe would not ſuffer ſuch a libel as this Bill to paſs; for if it were to paſs, he ſhould think it unworthy to make uſe of that excluſive privilege which is allowed to the Members of that Houſe, to be the prattling repreſentative of a dumb and enſlaved people.

Mr. Martin ſaid, this was not a time to make propoſitions of loyalty, upon which Miniſters ſo evidently practiced every day: no man could lament more than he did, the daring outrage that had been offered to Majeſty; and he revered the family on the throne. He believed in his conſcience, that the Right Honourable Gentleman had taken advantage of what had happened, to rouſe a ſpirit in the country to ſupport the intolerable meaſures of Government. He had long foreſeen what was going forward, and there was no proſpect of their getting out of their difficulties. Such a military force was eſtabliſhed all over the country, that he feared much blood would be ſhed before the nation could regain its liberties, and defend the conſtitution. Every town in England was full of ſoldiers. In his return to London, it had been his cuſtom, he ſaid, to paſs through Oxford, at which Univerſity he had received his education, as a place where he hoped to enjoy a little repoſe from the ſcenes of active life. But he of late heard more drums, trumpets, and fifes there, than college bells. Many proud, pompous buildings in the county had been converted into barracks. He remembered the day when no Member of that Houſe would have dared to propoſe ſuch a meaſure. He concluded with ſaying, that theſe were the few obſervations which occurred to him, and he mentioned them in the fullneſs of his heart.

The Secretary of War (Mr. Windham) ſaid he had heard much of aſſertion, that the liberties of this country were gone, and that the people were enſlaved; but theſe aſſertions had been ſupported by very little reaſoning. The Honourable Gentlemen, on the other ſide of the Houſe, had long been too much in uniſon with the feelings and ſentiments of the people who compoſe ſuch meetings, and therefore it was not at all ſurpriſing that they ſhould expreſs the ſame feelings on this occaſion. It was not, however, from ſuch opinions, that the Houſe was to form its ideas. No man could

could doubt but that a number of men in this country were engaged in deſigns to ſubvert the conſtitution. Certain gentlemen exulted at that circumſtance. He wiſhed them joy of that exultation, but he could not ſhare it with them. He ſaw it with regret, and it was with regret that he attempted a remedy. If the law at preſent did not reach thoſe ſocieties, it was fit they ſhould make a law for them. The principles adopted by thoſe ſocieties went directly to the deſtruction of the conſtitution. Whether certain doctrines had made a progreſs in the country, and whether they were attended with danger, or were likely to be ſo, was the iſſue between them, and on which he called for judgment. When in the feelings of every body the whole world had confeſſedly undergone great changes, the Honourable Gentlemen on the other ſide of the Houſe ſeemed to have forgot there was ſuch a thing as the French Revolution, the greateſt fabric, as had been repreſented, which human wiſdom ever founded on human virtue. Look at the authors and ſupporters of this ſyſtem itſelf, and every man muſt ſee they had the ambition to produce even a greater a change in the world, than was produced by its converſion from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity; or by the Saracens under Mahomet. The preſent leaders of France had annulled treaties in a thouſand inſtances. They were not to be bound by the old muſty maxims of Grotius and Puffendorf. They had endeavoured to exterminate all traces of ancient inſtitutions, and had attempted to make the world adopt a new principle. Was there a country in Europe ſafe from the poiſon of theſe principles, or which had not felt the effect of this great democracy? Were not the principles openly avowed in every country, and acted on by men of information and talents? It was evident there was a ſet of men in this country, who openly profeſſed an attachment to the French Republic, who wiſhed them ſucceſs, and only waited for an opportunity to co-operate with them and join them. What was the caſe of Holland? Was it an entire conqueſt, and was there no French party in Holland? Was even America ſecure againſt the propagation of French principles? Did any man before the preſent moment hear of an unjuſt war againſt France? He deſired the Houſe to examine the French Revolution, and then to ſay whether that war was not juſt, which was undertaken againſt robbers and murderers, and thoſe who were guilty of every crime that ever blackened human nature. To ſay that ſuch a war was not juſt, was an outrage againſt the common ſenſe of every man. There never had been a period in the hiſtory of this country when ſuch opinions had been entertained, and it was ſelf-evident

 that

that the progreſs of laws and crimes muſt go hand in hand. When new offences occur, new laws muſt be enacted to meet them. The only queſtion was, whether this remedy was to be applied, or whether thoſe ſocieties and their meetings were to be permitted to go on preaching ſedition and treaſon as much as they pleaſed? They had circulated hand-bills and papers of a nature too ſcandalous to be ſtated. They mentioned directly the aſſaſſination of the Sovereign, and this was followed in a few days by an actual attack on him: yet certain Honourable Gentlemen did not think this meaſure of ſafety advantageous to be adopted; and ſaw no connection between the language held at theſe meetings and that attack. No government that ever exiſted permitted ſuch meetings, and as an *argumentum ad hominem*, the glorious ſyſtem of new French liberty did not admit of them. The moment a man ſaid any thing the leaſt obnoxious to the Government, they took a ſhort method with him, and cut off his head. Mr. Windham made other obſervations.

Mr. Grey charged the Right Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt, with having accuſed his Honourable friends who oppoſed the motion, of bringing forward aſſertions only in ſupport of their oppoſition, he therefore expected the Honourable Gentleman would on his part have produced arguments that might be thought of weight. How very great then was his aſtoniſhment, when inſtead of arguments, he found the Right Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech was made up wholly of aſſertions. He was at all times happy to hear the Right Honourable Gentleman, who either did not poſſeſs the confidence, or was not acquainted with the crafty wiles of Miniſters. For this he was not ſorry, as their inconſiſtency and abſurdity of conduct appeared more clearly from the Right Honourable Gentleman's ſpeeches. The decline and abjuration of violent democratic principles had on a former occaſion been much dwelt on, as the happy effect of the war, yet at that moment, the prevalence of thoſe very principles was made the ground of the Bill propoſed by Miniſters. The Right Honourable Gentleman had rung the alarm bell ſo loudly and effectually in order to prevent the diſſemination of thoſe principles, that he had frightened himſelf out of all the principles which he formerly poſſeſſed. It was argued in favour of the motion, that the ſpirit of turbulence and diſcontent was encreaſing among the people of this country, and the Bill intended to be brought in by Miniſters was thought a neceſſary meaſure to ſecure the Conſtitution from invaſion. He was ready to allow that diſcontent, and that of a very alarming nature, prevailed in the nation, but could it, he aſked, be attributed to the princi-

ples

ples which had been ſo frequently held up to the publick deteſtation? Certainly not. If properly traced it would be found to originate in the corruption and folly of Miniſters, who by plunging the country into an unjuſt war, produced calamities which they were unable to alleviate or redreſs. But taking leave of French principles he would examine the outlines of the Bill, as ſtated by the Miniſter. It was urged, that there were not only diſcontented men, but traitors in the country, who ſought in the moſt daring manner to deſtroy the Conſtitution. That there were ſuch wretches he would readily admit, wretches of the moſt baſe and abominable kind, traitors, who ſtrove, by the moſt atrocious means, to ſubvert the Conſtitution; he would not name who thoſe traitors were, nor in what ſituations they were placed, but he was convinced, that if ſuffered to proceed in their iniquitous plans, they would inevitably produce the dreadful effects which were ſo much affected to be apprehended from popular meetings and private clubs. Mr. Grey declared, he could not conceive any connection between the meeting at Copenhagen-houſe and the outrage which had been committed on his Majeſty's perſon; ſo far from it, he ſaid he would rather incur the imputation of acting with thoſe men to whom Miniſters alluded, than ſuffer the motion made that night to paſs without his moſt marked diſapprobation; conſidering it as he did, as an attempt to rob the people of their deareſt rights and enſlave the nation.

He declared he had not read the ſpeeches which were delivered at Copenhagen-houſe; but ſince the Right Honourable Gentleman had alluded to the perſons who were acquitted in the trials for ſedition, he would take that opportunity to ſay, that he exulted in their acquittal, and conſidered that Britiſh liberty was, in that inſtance, by the conſtitutional exertions of a jury, reſcued from the moſt flagitious and daring attack ever made on it. He believed Miniſters were deeply affected that they had not ſucceeded on that occaſion; but it appeared from the preſent motion, that they intended to enſure their ſucceſs on a future day. "Are not the laws, as they now ſtand," exclaimed Mr. Grey, "ſufficient to prevent or ſuppreſs ſeditious meetings? What tumult occurred in conſequence of the meeting at Copenhagen-houſe? Was not Government fully enabled by the aſſiſtance of the civil and military power to quell any riot that might have happened? But the event of that aſſembly was, it would appear, not conſonant to the expectation of Miniſters. The people aſſembled and diſperſed in the moſt peaceable manner, and the ſpeeches delivered there, of which ſuch

ſuch artful uſe is made, did not excite the leaſt commotion. The ſupporters of the motion talked of their love for the Conſtitution, and their deſire to preſerve, by ſo ſtrange a meaſure as was that propoſed, the liberties of Engliſhmen. Such declarations he muſt conſider as ſuſpicious. He felt at the moment they praiſed themſelves for their adherence to the purity of the Conſtitution, that they meant to wound it in its moſt vital part. An Honourable Baronet (Sir William Pulteney) had obſerved, by way of palliating the evil propoſed, that in this country the liberty of the preſs was preſerved in the fulleſt extent. Ought we therefore to be deprived of the liberty of ſpeech? It had been preſſed as an argument, that Government could not be ſupported by other means. If it could not be ſupported by other means, the queſtion naturally ariſes, ſhould it be ſupported at all? The beſt governments would occaſionally excite diſcontent; and why ſhould not a government diſgraced by Miniſters, whoſe baſeneſs and folly have degraded the country, whoſe fooliſh and ruinous ſyſtem has univerſally propagated diſcontent, and every where produced the ſevereſt reprobation of their meaſures, produce the ſame effect in a more eminent degree? The Right Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt has obſerved, that a regular plan of attack was formed for ſubverting the Conſtitution, and that the ſame manner of proceeding was adopted, that had cauſed the Revolution in France. What, ſaid Mr. Grey, is the ſyſtem of defence, what are the tactics with which this attack is to be repelled? Miniſters propoſe to cruſh the people, and muſt neceſſarily deſtroy the Conſtitution, under the flimſy pretence of defending it; a dangerous plan; a plan unlikely to ſucceed, it being infinitely more probable that they will cruſh themſelves. Mr. Grey concluded by obſerving, that he would on every occaſion oppoſe ſo deteſtable a meaſure.

Mr. Montague acquitted Miniſters of inconſiſtency, and contended that the object of the meetings alluded to was but too evidently to ſubvert the conſtitution.

Mr. Buxton ſaid, 4 or 500 people had aſſembled in his neighbourhood, who, he was confident, had it not in idea to amend, but to overturn the conſtitution. To effect this was clearly the object of moſt of thoſe popular meetings. He would therefore give his ſupport to the Bill, but hoped it would be repealed when the neceſſity of the times would no longer juſtify it.

Mr. Bouverie ſaid, he would vote for bringing in the Bill, but ſhould oppoſe it in its future progreſs.

The

The Houſe then divided on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's motion.

Ayes	- -	214
Noes	- -	42
Majority	-	172

CALL OF THE HOUSE.

MR. FOX urged a variety of reaſons to prove the neceſſity of a call of the Houſe previous to the ultimate deciſion of the Houſe on a Bill of ſo much importance. He concluded with moving a call.

MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS ſaid, he would not oppoſe the call, though, in general, he thought a call of the Houſe either nugatory or harraſſing. In this particular inſtance, however, it might be proper, as he was willing to own, that unleſs it was obvious that this Bill had the concurrence of the majority of the people of England, it ought not to be paſſed into a law. That it would be found to have ſuch concurrence he had no doubt, having been beſieged in his office, for months paſt, with applications for ſuch a Bill; and it was by the advice of a number of gentlemen, that Miniſters had at length brought it forward.

MR. SHERIDAN, hoped and truſted, that before the Bill, which would ſtrike ſo fatal a blow at the freedom of Engliſhmen, was brought in, the voice of Liberty would be heard from every corner of the kingdom, deprecating an evil ſo ruinous in its conſequences. Miniſters, he obſerved, ſeemed deſirous to ſhift from themſelves the infamy of this meaſure, by ſaying, that they had been adviſed to bring it forward many months ſooner. He could ſafely charge them with the moſt glaring inconſiſtency, ſince in the firſt inſtance they declared the outrage committed on the perſon of the King to be the ground-work of the meaſure, and immediately afterwards admitted, that they had ſuch a Bill in contemplation before the outrage took place. The attempt to conceal the authors of the Bill, was an acknowledgment, on their own parts, of the moſt dangerous tendency. They wiſhed to make it doubtful from whence it came. He had no doubt but that, if time were given, the Honourable Gentleman would find the opinion of the public very pointedly expreſſed, and very loudly, againſt a Bill which ſtruck at the foundation of Britiſh liberty. A Bill which was called for by no circumſtances, except what he believed Miniſters called, the PROVIDENTIAL outrage on his Majeſty.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in anſwer to the charge of inconſiſtency, ſaid the late atrocious attack, perhaps, had expedited the Bill, and made the ſentiment general, as to its immediate neceſſity; but many gentlemen of high authority had before conſidered it politic and expedient, and poſſibly it would have been produced if no ſuch accident had happened. Where then was the inconſiſtency? But he thought a call of little avail, when he looked round and ſaw ſo full an attendance. With regard to the call, he would only ſay, that he would not oppoſe it ultimately; but as gentlemen had ſaid that the objection was to the principle, and not to the detail in the Committee, the principle might as well be diſcuſſed on the third reading as at any other ſtage. He thought it would not be doing his duty if he admitted of any delay, and therefore he gave that notice, that the Bill would be produced in a day or two, that it would be read a firſt and ſecond time, and go through the Committee before the call.

MR. GREY thought it would have been the higheſt aggravation of the injury when the people were to be deprived of their liberties by this odious meaſure, that they ſhould not have the conſolation of having the collective opinion of their repreſentatives, but that it ſhould be triumphantly carried through by a miniſterial majority; that he truſted Miniſters would find the ſenſe of the nation on this moſt deteſtable Bill, as pointedly declared as it ever was on any queſtion. The Honourable Gentleman had more than once found that the majority of that Houſe did not ſpeak the ſenſe of the nation; on the Ruſſian armament, the voice of the people loudly declared had ſaved the nation from a war, in which the majority of that Houſe would have involved us. The Honourable Gentleman was at times for the majority of the Houſe againſt the voice of the people—at others, for the voice of the people againſt the majority, as the one or the other would beſt ſuit his purpoſe. He now looked round to the preſent attendance, and ſaid, there was no reaſon for a call. What was the attendance? not one half of the Houſe. Surely the people of England had a right to expect that a Bill of ſuch dreadful import ſhould at leaſt be diſcuſſed in a full Houſe. He aſſured the Honourable Member, that he ſhould oppoſe it in every legal way, both in that Houſe and out of it; and that he hoped this laſt ſtruggle for the rights of Engliſhmen would be made with firmneſs.

MR. MAURICE ROBINSON joined him in ſaying, that he hoped time would be given at leaſt to utter the laſt bitter groans of expiring liberty.

I

MR.

Mr. Fox took notice of Mr. Pitt's aſſertion, that he ſhould not think it neceſſary, on account of the call, to delay the ſtages of the Bill. Mr. Fox ſaid, he hoped that more reſpect would be paid to the repreſentatives of the people, than wantonly to hurry through a meaſure of this kind. If the call was important, it was that they might diſcuſs the Bill in all its ſtages, and particularly in the ſtage uſual for diſcuſſing the principle.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, the Right Hon. Gentleman, by hurrying the Bill through the Committee before the call, did not treat the abſent members fairly; they were left in the diſagreeable dilemma of ſwallowing that moſt fatal poiſon to Britiſh liberty altogether, or entirely diſſenting from the Bill. Many of the abſent members, like himſelf, would, if they could not ſucceſsfully oppoſe the pernicious principle of the Bill, try, if poſſible, to take out ſome of its ſting, when it was in the Committee; for his own part, he thought it neceſſary to declare, that he ſhould not content himſelf with oppoſing the principle; he ſhould oppoſe the Bill in every ſtage, in the Committee as well as out of it; and in the detail as well as the principle.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he only meant that there was no occaſion for delay; the call did not prevent gentlemen from attending before the third reading. The Bill would be ready to come into the Houſe in a day or two, and then they might proceed as uſual through the ſtages of it.

The Houſe then agreed to the motion for a call, which was fixed for that day fortnight.

MINORITY *on Mr.* Pitt's Motion, *with the Places they repreſent.*

Aubrey, Sir John, *Clitherow*
Barclay, George, *Bridport*
Bouverie, Hon. Edw. *Northampton*
Byng, George, *Middleſex*
Courtenay, John, *Tamworth*
Creſpigny, C. C. *Sudbury*
Curwen, J. C. *Carliſle*
Erſkine, Hon. Thos. *Portſmouth*
Fitzpatrick, Gen. *Taviſtock*
Fox, Charles James, *Weſtminſter*
Francis, Phillip, *Bletchingley*
Halhed, N. B. *Lymington*
Hare, James, *Knareſborough*
Harriſon, John, *Great Grimſby*
Huſſey, William, *New Sarum*
Jeykyll, J. *Calne*
Jervoiſe, J. C. *Yarmouth*
Lampton, W. H. *Durham*
Lechmere, Ed. *Worceſter*
Lemon, Sir Wm. *Cornwall*
Mac Leod, Gen. *Inverneſſhire*
Martin James, *Tewkſbury*

Milner,

Milner, Sir Wm. *York*
North, Dudley, *Great Grimſby*
Peirſe, Henry, *Northalerton*
Philips, J. G. *Carmarthen*
Plumer, Wm. *Hertfordſhire*
Robinſon, Maurice, *Boroughbridge*
Ruſſel, Lord Wm. *Surry*
St. John, Hon. St. A. *Bedfordſhire*
Scudamore John, *Hereford*
Smith, Gen. *Wareham*
Smith, Wm. *Camelford*
Milbank, Ralph, *Durham*
Spencer, Lord J. Robt. *Wareham*
Stanley, John Thomas, *Wootton Baſſet*
Sturt, C. *Bridport*
Tarleton, Gen. *Liverpool*
Thompſon, Thomas, *Eveſham*
Weſtern, C. C. *Malden*
Whitbread, S. jun. *Bedford*
Winnington, Sir Edward, *Droitwich.*

TELLERS.

R. B. Sheridan, Eſq. *Stafford*
Charles Grey, Eſq. *Northumberland*

In all 44.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

The proceedings of the Correſponding Society at their public Meetings having been often alluded to, in the preceding as well as the ſubſequent debates, it becomes neceſſary, in arranging the materials of this hiſtory, to exhibit an account of theſe meetings, as publiſhed in the Newſpapers, and otherwiſe, upon the authority of the principal perſons concerned in the ſociety. Their firſt public meeting was held on Monday, June 29; and the ſecond on Monday, October 26, 1795.

ACCOUNT OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT A GENERAL MEETING OF THE *LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY,*

Convened by public advertiſement, and held in an incloſed field, behind the Long Room, Borough-Road, St. George's Fields, on Monday, the 29th of June, 1795.

CITIZEN JOHN GALE JONES in the Chair.

A GENERAL MEETING of the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY having been propoſed and approved of by a very conſiderable Majority, Advertiſements were iſſued to convene the Members for the purpoſe of conſidering the beſt means of obtaining *Univerſal Suffrage* and *Annual Parliaments:* accordingly, on Monday the 29th of June, 1795, the Society met in an incloſed field, near the *Obeliſk* in *St. George's-Fields*; and about three o'clock, P.M. Citizen JONES, being appointed Chairman, roſe and addreſſed them in the following manner ;—

CITIZENS!

CITIZENS!

IT is with infinite ſatisfaction that I behold here aſſembled, on this day, ſo very numerous and reſpectable a meeting: it preſents indeed to my view a ſpectacle at once ſublime and awful, ſince it ſeems as if the whole Britiſh Nation had convened itſelf upon this extraordinary occaſion, to witneſs the propriety of our conduct, and teſtify for the legality of our proceedings. They will not, I believe, be diſappointed. We meet for no other than our original purpoſe, a Parliamentary Reform; and diſclaim all intention of tumult or violence. I hope, by our firm, yet moderate conduct, we ſhall gain the good-will and concurrence of all who are here preſent, and convince them that we are, as we ever have been, the ſincere advocates and ſteady promoters of univerſal peace and tranquillity. The immediate objects to which I would call your attention are,—-an *Addreſs to the Nation*, another *to the King*, and a few Reſolutions expreſſive of the preſent ſituation of the country, and our determination to purſue, by every legal and conſtitutional method, the beſt means of obtaining our natural Rights, Univerſal Suffrage, and Annual Parliaments.

ADDRESS to the NATION.

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS!

AFTER the lapſe of more than a twelvemonth, replete with fearful agitation and alarm, the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY, ſtill firm in its principles, and faithful to its original purpoſe, again offers itſelf to your notice, and ſolicits your immediate attention. Never at any time, from the rude inſtitutions of uncultivated ignorance, to the more poliſhed periods of modern refinement, has there been ſubmitted to the conſideration of man a more awful or a more critical moment! It is, indeed, a moment worthy of ſerious deliberation. To be guilty of raſhneſs or intemperance would ſerve only to prejudice and inflame; yet to be wholly ſilent, would betray a criminal indifference.

While the ſlow, yet ſteady progreſſion of human improvement, by exciting curioſity, and awakening enquiry, has produced in all countries an inſenſible revolution of opinion: mankind, as yet unaccuſtomed to great and novel changes, has too often been inclined to treat them as viſionary and impracticable, and has refuſed to countenance and approve what it has not yet experienced. Hence may we readily account for the exiſtence and perpetuation of abuſes, which, having originated in ignorance, are afterwards continued from habit, and ſupported by folly; hence may we be eaſily led to diſtinguiſh that ſervile and accommodating diſpoſition which prefers a partial evil to an uncertain good, and contents itſelf with purſuing the beaten track of uniformity, while it dreads to venture into the unknown, though alluring path of innovation.

But, with nations as with individuals, it ſometimes happens, that the *hour of danger is the hour of inquiry*; and what would have been withheld from the calm remonſtrances of reaſon, is often yielded to the ſtrong impulſe of neceſſity.

At

At ſuch a time, and in ſo critical a ſituation, the colliſion of contending intereſts, and the rude ſhock of adverſe powers, are for awhile the only arguments of application, and the only effectual means of redreſs! All deliberation is ſuſpended, and the mind looks forward with a fearful horror to the termination of the dreadful conteſt! Happy the nation which, by lenient and gentle methods, can ſuperſede the neceſſity of ſo deſperate a remedy! Happy the people who are not *compelled* to recur to this ultimate and awful appeal!

To prevent confuſion, and preſerve tranquillity, is the indiſpenſible duty of every individual, who would enjoy the comforts and protection of civil ſociety; it is neceſſary, therefore, that he ſhould at all times, and at all hazards, exert his utmoſt to warn his Fellow Citizens of their impending danger, and oppoſe the artful and ambitious deſigns of thoſe who, under miſerable pretexts, would enſlave and deſtroy his country. It is not enough that he ſhould boldly diſſeminate his opinions and propagate his principles; that he ſhould aſſociate with men of ſimilar ſentiments and ſimilar views but he muſt alſo, if occaſion require, cheerfully conſent to be ſelected from the aggregate maſs, AND DIE IN THEIR DEFENCE!

It is now near four years ſince we firſt called your attention to the circumſtances of the times, and to the ſituation of your country: if it were neceſſary *then* to aſſociate, how much more is that neceſſity *now* increaſed! We felt it our duty to unite and proclaim our grievances, thoſe grievances are augmented tenfold; and is this a time to be ſilent or abandon our cauſe? We believe a Parliamentary Reform to be the only means of preſerving our country from deſtruction, and is our perſuaſion become leſs firm, or are our opinions altered? Did we not foreſee the calamities which muſt reſult from the want of a fair and equal Repreſentation of the People of Britain in the Commons Houſe of Parliament, and call on the united energies of the country to aſſert its rights? And is it a time to relinquiſh all further exertions, and deſert our principles? Surely not! The public mind is at length rouſed to a ſenſe of its ſituation; it ſees the dreadful precipice on which it ſtands; it encourages us to proceed in our uſeful and virtuous career, and aſſures us it will ſecond our endeavours. Yes, Britons! you begin to exert the privilege of thinking, and mental energy will ſoon be ſucceeded by determined reſolution! You will not quietly ſee your country laid in ruins, to gratify the lofty arrogance of an inſolent Adminiſtration! You will not much longer permit your Fellow-Citizens to be dragged from their peaceful occupations to fight againſt the Liberties of Mankind, nor ſuffer your wives and children to be robbed of that ſcanty loaf, which, inſtead of preſerving them from ſtarving, is ſent to feed ſubſidized cut-throats, and foreign mercenaries! Away with cold calculations of ſafety, or prudence—with paltry expedients and ill-timed fears! It is neceſſary for all honeſt men to ſpeak out, *the Times and the Country demand it!* Are we men, and ſhall we not ſpeak? Are we BRITONS, and is not LIBERTY our BIRTHRIGHT! There is no power on earth ſhall ſilence the voice of an injured nation, or prevent the progreſs of free inquiry! —Bring forth your whips and racks, ye Miniſters of Vengeance!—Produce your ſcaffolds and your executioners!—Erect barracks in every ſtreet, and Baſtilles in every corner!—Perſecute and puniſh every innocent individual! —but you will *not* ſucceed! The voice of reaſon, like the roaring of the

Nemean

Nemean Lion, ſhall iſſue even from the cavern's mouth! The holy bloo of Patriotiſm, ſtreaming from the ſevering axe, ſhall carry with it the infant ſeeds of Liberty, and men may periſh---but Truth ſhall be eternal!

While among other terrible effects of the preſent cruel and diſaſtrous war, gaunt Famine ſtalks along your ſtreets, and haggard Wretchedneſs aſſails you in every ſhape; mark, Citizens, the ſhameful negligence and unfeeling conduct of thoſe who hold that power which ought to be intruſted to none but your *real* Repreſentatives! When a propoſition to inquire into the cauſe of the preſent ſcarcity is coldly and reluctantly brought forward, it is in a moment ſilenced by the inſidious whiſpers of a Secretary of State, "*that ſuch a diſcuſſion would do more harm than good:*" Thus are you left to experience not only the *humanity* of the preſent Miniſtry, in exporting your food to foreign mercenaries, but are compelled alſo to endure all the ſevere extortions of *private avarice and monopoly!*

Let us entreat you not to fall into thoſe fatal errors which have ſo frequently miſled our anceſtors, nor reſt your expectations on that deluſive phantom—a change of Miniſters! With *ſuch* a Houſe of Commons, no Miniſtry *can* perform its duty to the people! Your CHIEF, perhaps your ONLY hope, is in YOURSELVES!

We call, therefore, upon your native good ſenſe and courage to promote and aſſiſt the glorious cauſe for which we have ſo long and ſo peaceably aſſociated: we need not preſs upon your conviction the neceſſity of a ſpeedy and effectual Reform, nor repeat the obſervation which is ſo loudly echoed from every part of this diſtracted country, "THAT SOMETHING MUST BE DONE!" If the event of the late State Trials, with which we ſincerely congratulate *You*; if the perſeverance we have ſhewn, and the perſecutions we have experienced, have contributed aught to acquit us of all evil intention, and to acquire us your good opinion, we conjure you by that Freedom we adore, that Conſtitution we venerate, and that common intereſt we all poſſeſs in the proſperity of our country, to unite your vigorous exertions with ours, and by every legal and conſtitutional method, endeavour to procure to the people of Great Britain their *natural and undoubted Rights*---"UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE and ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS!

This Addreſs having been twice read to the Members within the field was carried to the wall oppoſite the Preſident, which afforded the greateſt opportunity of communicating the proceedings to the immenſe multitude which ſurrounded the meeting: after which the following ADDRESS TO THE KING was brought forward:

TO

TO THE

KING's Most Excellent MAJESTY.

The ADDRESS of the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY, convened in General Meeting on Monday the 29th June, 1795, (**approved also by many Thousands of other Inhabitants of London, Westminster, and Southwark, who attended at this said Meeting*).

SIRE,

IMPRESSED with a sense of the numerous calamities with which our fellow citizens are every where oppressed and overwhelmed, and conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we feel it our duty, at this critical juncture, thus publicly to address you, and claim your favourable attention. In delivering our free and undisguised sentiments, we disclaim all intention of rudeness or incivility; but we disdain also to flatter:—we would speak the honest language of *Freemen*—not practise the fawning servility of slaves.

We are fully sensible that numerous attempts have been made to misrepresent our object and calumniate our intentions. It has been not only insinuated, but declared, that we are inimical to your person, and averse to your authority: but, convinced as we are, that reflection and experience are not always banished from kingly bosoms, we had hoped, that the event of the late Trials would have manifested our innocence, and the increasing distresses of our country have shewn you, that if guilt can any where attach itself, it must be to those who have been constantly endeavouring to poison your ear and pervert your understanding.

Your Ministers have grossly and shamefully deceived you;—they have used your name as a pretext to enslave and destroy the people; and have staked the safety of your Crown for their own political salvation:—they have set up to sale the virgin honours of the State, and violated the fair fame of the British Constitution!

But it is necessary, Sire, that you should be undeceived; and, if you have not an honest Minister, that will dare to speak the truth, THE PEOPLE SHOULD INSTRUCT THEIR SOVEREIGN, AND SAVE HIM FROM DESTRUCTION!

It is time that you should discern your friends and detect your enemies!

We have often sought, at the hazard even of our lives, to preserve you in the enjoyment of what ought at all times to constitute the chief felicity of a Sovereign—*the people's love*—and to secure you in the happy possession of peace and universal tranquillity:

But your Ministers, dreading lest you should have a common interest with the people, have basely slandered us, and represented a considerable part of the British Nation as disaffected and disloyal! By their infamous manoeuvres they have betrayed you, and endangered even your safety!—The nation itself stands tottering upon the brink of ruin, and YOUR EXISTENCE IS COUPLED WITH THEIRS!

* The words in *Italics* were inserted by the Committee in the Manuscript Copy delivered at the Secretary of State's Office for the Home Department.

We

We conjure you, Sire, in the name, and for the ſake of that glorious Revolution, which ſeated the Houſe of Brunſwick on the Throne, to yield a timely attention to the cries of a ſuffering people, and to exert that power with which the conſtitution has intruſted you;—to give them that free and equal repreſentation, which can alone enable the Britiſh Nation to prevent future and remove the preſent calamities;—to diſmiſs from your councils thoſe guilty Miniſters, who have ſo long with impunity inſulted us, and betrayed our deareſt intereſts;—to put an immediate period to the ravages of a cruel and deſtructive war, and to reſtore to us that peace and tranquillity, which are ſo eſſentially neceſſary for YOUR OWN PERSONAL SECURITY, AND FOR THE HAPPINESS OF THE PEOPLE!

The Addreſs to the King was, in the manner already deſcribed, communicated, as far as poſſible, to the company without.

The two Addreſſes were then put to the vote—That to the nation was unanimouſly approved; but the Addreſs to the King cauſed a conſiderable degree of debate; and which, in all probability, would have been much more extenſive, had not the attention of ſo many of the moſt active Members been engaged in communicating the proceedings to the remote parts of the Company.

In oppoſition to the Addreſs it was contended,—That the Society ought to confine its efforts to the diſſemination of political knowledge among their countrymen in general; and that every other mode of attempting to attain a redreſs of grievances would ultimately prove deluſive—That while every means were uſed to awaken national prejudices againſt the principles of liberty, the Society ought not in ſilence to ſuffer the introduction of the principles of modern Germany; thoſe principles, by which ſoldiers, who, on all other occaſions, are expected to exceed the courage of lions, are, with reſpect to their officers, required to ſink beneath the ſubmiſſiveneſs of ſpaniels—That the late execution of *Pariſh* and *Cook*, two privates of the Oxfordſhire Militia, and the pains which have ſince been taken to miſrepreſent their conduct, and injure their characters, furniſhed no reaſon to hope any thing from the humanity of the executive part of our government: it was alſo contended, that the idea of addreſſing the King was nugatory, it being underſtood that ſome late regulations preclude all poſſibility of preſenting any Addreſs immediately to himſelf; and that, in paſſing through the Privy Council, there could be no ſecurity that it would not be mutilated or ſuppreſſed.

In ſupport of the Addreſs it was urged, that individuals, while forming but a minority of a nation, were in duty bound, whatever might be their private opinions, to regulate their public conduct by thoſe inſtitutions which had been ſanctioned by the approbation or even acquieſcence of their countrymen—That if the ſyſtem of government eſtabliſhed in this country was really defective, nothing could tend more directly to expoſe its defects than the inefficacy of meaſures adopted in compliance with its doctrines—That the power of reforming the repreſentation, ſtated in the Addreſs to be poſſeſſed by the King, implied, like all other magiſterial authority, a duty to exerciſe it for the general good—That the exclamations now ſo common, that the King would pay no attention to the ſentiments of the people, were premature, and would continue to be ſo until the nation in general were

prevailed

prevailed on to require of him to uſe this part of his authority in a juſt and equitable manner; and, laſtly, that if no other mode of preſentment, except through the Privy Council, could be found, ſtill the publication of the Addreſs would counteract any wiſh of theirs to mutilate or ſuppreſs it.

On the queſtion being put, there appeared a large majority in favour of the Addreſs.—and a motion being made and ſeconded, that Citizen Earl STANHOPE be requeſted to preſent the ſame, it was carried unanimouſly.

A number of reſolutions were then propoſed, which, after ſome amendments and additions, were ſeverally put and carried, as follows:

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,

1ſt. That believing the diſtreſſes of this country to be owing to the want of a free and equal repreſentation of the people in the Commons Houſe of Parliament, we think it our duty, at the preſent alarming criſis, to call the public attention to this important ſubject, and requeſt their co-operation and aſſiſtance.

2dly. That we are well aſſured our fellow countrymen will never experience any alleviation of theſe diſtreſſes, until they obtain their natural and undoubted rights, "Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments."

3dly. That we view with horror and deteſtation the preſent cruel, unjuſt and unneceſſary war, which we believe was ſolely deſigned to deſtroy the liberties of Britain and annihilate thoſe of France; and as the dreadful ſcarcity and high price of proviſions are to be attributed to this cauſe, we are fully convinced that the only means of removing theſe, and preventing future calamities, will be immediately to acknowledge the BRAVE French Republic, and to obtain a ſpeedy and laſting peace.

4thly. That the event of the late State Trials has clearly manifeſted the innocence of this Society, and fixed the guilt on thoſe who truly deſerve puniſhment—THEIR PERSECUTORS!

5thly. That the manly, firm, and conſiſtent conduct of citizens Earl STANHOPE and R. B. SHERIDAN, has ſhewn us that we have *one* honeſt man in *each* Houſe of Parliament, and calls for our admiration and applauſe.

6thly. That, fully convinced of the legality of our proceedings, and conſiſtent with our principles, we treat with contempt and diſregard the malicious inſinuations and ill-founded aſſertions of our enemies; and as the beſt proof, notwithſtanding the idle threats of corrupt and deſperate Miniſters, we have again dared to meet in the open day, and call upon our countrymen to teſtify for our legal and peaceable conduct, and to aſſure them that, conſidering their cauſe as our own, we will not be deterred from purſuing the grand object for which we have aſſociated, until we have obtained a ſpeedy and effectual redreſs.

It was afterwards Reſolved,

7thly. That the thanks of this Society be given to Citizens ERSKINE and GIBBS, for their able and eloquent defence of the priſoners at the late trials, and to citizens CLARKSON and FOULKES, for their judicious management of the ſame.

8thly. That the thanks of this Society be given to the ſurrounding multitude, (the largeſt ever aſſembled upon any occaſion), for their peaceable and orderly behaviour at the preſent meeting.

After

After a motion of adjournment had been put and carried, the laſt reſolution was communicated by Citizen JONES, in the following manner:

FRIENDS AND FELOW-CITIZENS!

I hope the event of this truly great and glorious day will fully prove to the world that a very large body of the people can, even in the moſt critical and perilous times, aſſemble to deliberate upon public meaſures, without the ſmalleſt violation of order or the ſlighteſt breach of decorum. If there be any here preſent, who have come from motives of curioſity or ſuſpicion, they muſt, if they faithfully report us, declare that our conduct upon this occaſion has been ſtrictly legal and conſtitutional, and frankly acknowledge, that the friends of reform are indeed the friends of peace! It has been ſaid, that we ſhould be interrupted and diſperſed by the interference of a military force; I believe it was an *idle*, I am ſure it was an *uſeleſs* threat: I wiſh we were ſurrounded by ſoldiers, and that they could be ſpectators of the whole of our proceedings, becauſe I am ſure that they would ſoon perceive the truth and juſtice of our declarations; and, if required to *act*, would *fight* not againſt, but *for the people!* But although this would be an infallible conſequence of ill-timed ſeverity, I hope there never will come a time, when the nation ſhall be reduced to ſuch an extremity, but that reaſon and remonſtrance alone will be always ſufficient to produce the deſired effects. We have now, I hope, completed in a ſatisfactory manner the buſineſs for which we have aſſembled; it remains only for me to return you our ſincere and hearty acknowledgments for the patient attention and favourable reception which we have this day experienced, and to hope that you will not forget the important cauſe for which we are aſſociated; and we truſt that you will immediately unite your exertions with ours, and that ere long the London Correſponding Society and the Britiſh Nation will be ONE AND INDIVISIBLE!

Citizen JONES having quitted the Chair,

IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Citizen JONES for his manly, judicious, and ſpirited conduct in the buſineſs of this day.

(Signed) JOHN GALE JONES, Chairman.
JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary.

Agreeable to the Reſolution of the General Meeting, a Deputation was appointed by the Executive Committee to wait on Citizen Earl Stanhope reſpecting the Preſentment of the Addreſs to the King; but, after ſome loſs of time, the Committee finding his Lordſhip's engagement in a naval experiment rendered his return to London uncertain, and a general anxiety for the publication of the proceedings prevailing among all deſcriptions of perſons, they appointed a deputation of ſix citizens*, by whom the Addreſs to the King was delivered at the office of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, on Wedneſday the 15th of July, 1795.

*J. G. JONES, J. MAXWELL,
J. BARTON, J. MOODY,
A. GALLAWAY, R. L. JONES.

PROCEEDINGS OF A GENERAL MEETING OF THE LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY,

Held on Monday October the 26th, 1795,

In a Field adjacent to COPENHAGEN-HOUSE, in the County of Middlesex.

THE indifference with which the late Addrefs from this fociety to the King was treated; the rapid approximation of National deftruction, thro' the continuation of the prefent deteftable war;—the horrors of an approaching famine;—and, above all, the increafed corruption, and inquifitorial meafures purfued and purfuing, by thofe who hold the country in bondage—obliged this fociety to appeal once more to their fellow countrymen, and their common friends the advocates of Reform, in order to obtain, by an open and explicit difcuffion of thofe feveral topics, a precife and unequivocal declaration of the public opinion, upon objects fo effential to the prefent good and future glory of this country.

Accordingly, a Meeting was convened by public advertifement, to be held in a field adjacent to Copenhagen-Houfe, near Iflington, in the county of Middlefex, on Monday the 26th of October, 1795.

Precautions were taken to fruftrate the efforts of perfons hired to promote diforder at the meeting, for which purpofe feveral thoufand hand-bills were circulated in the numerous avenues leading to the place of meeting, and on the ground, recommending orderly and peaceable behaviour.

Previous to the meeting, the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY had taken into confideration numerous communications from different parts of the country, fuggefting the utility that would refult from the opening a more active and direct communication between the people in thofe feveral places, and this fociety, by the appointment of members on deputation to open and regulate Societies for Parliamentary Reform; which was likewife a meafure fubmitted to the public meeting.

About half an hour after twelve o'clock, the people affembled on the ground, according to the concurring calculations of feveral perfons, amounted to more than one hundred and fifty thoufand perfons, at the fame time that the roads in all directions were ftill covered with people thronging to the meeting.

Citizen JOHN GALE JONES opened the bufinefs of the day, by informing the meeting that the Committee, to whom the Society at large had delegated the truft, recommended Citizen JOHN BINNS, a well known and long tried Patriot, and an honeft man, to be the Chairman during the meeting of the day. Which being unanimoufly approved of,

Citizen JOHN BINNS took the chair, and addreffed the meeting in the following manner:

FELLOW CITIZENS!

"After the lapfe of a few months, the LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY has once more thought it their duty to call another Public Meeting, to fubmit to YOU and to the FRIENDS of Parliamentary REFORM, the neceffity of perfevering in fupport of your rights; and though fo little has refulted from the meeting which we laft held, owing to the unfeeling contempt which has been fhewn to our late addrefs delivered to His Majefty's Minifters,

ters, yet I hope that the aggravation of inſult and injury will not ſo far provoke you, but that you will now coolly and deliberately determine upon a further mode of proceeding, which ſhall enforce what has been done before, and convince thoſe Miniſters, that when the voice of a united people goes forth, it is their duty to attend to it; and if they do not they will be guilty of HIGH-TREASON againſt the PEOPLE, whoſe RIGHTS ought certainly to be paramount to all others in the great political balance of the nation. I ſhall therefore beg leave to inform you that the particular points intended to be brought before the preſent meeting for its approbation are three:

I. An ADDRESS TO THE NATION, on its preſent very critical and calamitous ſtate.

II. A REMONSTRANCE TO HIS MAJESTY, on the *neglect* and *contempt* which has been ſhewn to the late Addreſs preſented to His Miniſters. And,

III. CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS, which are thought applicable to the preſent alarming criſis, and abſolutely neceſſary to be entered into.

Theſe I will beg leave to read to you in regular ſucceſſion, as I have mentioned them; and it will then remain for YOU, either to propoſe amendments; totally to reject; or to ſtamp them with the weighty and LEGAL ſanction of your UNANIMOUS APPROBATION.

ADDRESS TO THE NATION.

" ONCE more, dear friends and fellow citizens, in defiance of threats and inſults—of baſe ſuggeſtions and unmanly fears—are we met in the open face of day, and call the heavens and earth to witneſs the purity of our proceedings. Amidſt the dreadful ſtorms and hurricanes which at preſent aſſail the political hemiſphere of our country, with firm and unabated vigour we purſue our avowed and real purpoſe—the grand and glorious cauſe of PARLIAMENTARY REFORM!—The rude gales of oppoſition, and the howling blaſts of perſecution have ſerved only to aſſiſt our career; and where we might have lingered from choice or indolence, we now ſteadily advance from the heavy preſſure of inevitable neceſſity!

" With anxious minds and agitated hearts, we are again compelled to addreſs you, and ſolicit your patient attention. There was a time, when we might, perhaps, have been ſtartled at the idea of rendering ourſelves ſo conſpicuous, and have ſought for refuge, under the veil of obſcurity. When the timid apprehenſion of our friends—the loſs of our moſt valuable intereſts and connexions—the threats of guilty Miniſters—and the hoſtile preparations of armed aſſociators, might have forcibly urged us to remain in mournful ſilence, and to retreat from the eye of obſervation;—but, alas! it is now too late!—When the welfare of Society is endangered, what individual is ſafe?—When the public happineſs is at ſtake, what private conſideration ought to avail?——We have been ſeverely perſecuted, it is true, but is our cauſe become leſs dear? We have been cruelly and unjuſtly treated—but has the Majeſty of *Truth* ſuffered in this ſhameful and unequal conteſt?—No! Away then with lifeleſs apathy and pale-hearted fear! Let every true and ſincere friend of Liberty boldly deliver his real ſentiments; and while he profeſſes the virtuous principles of a *patriot*, aſſert his independence, like a *man*!

" Four

"Four months ago we peaceably assembled to deliberate upon the best and most probable mode of recovering our rights, and redressing our numerous grievances: We *addressed* YOU, and we *petitioned* the KING. We believe, if we may judge from the rapid increase of our numbers since our last public meeting, that our sentiments and conduct experienced almost general approbation. From one particular quarter, however, we have not received that attention and regard, which, as *Britons* and *Freemen*, we might naturally have expected. The late Address to the King has either been artfully and prematurely suppressed, or passed over with unfeeling contempt. If the former, we hesitate not to say, that HIS MINISTERS have proved themselves GUILTY OF HIGH TREASON against the Lives and Liberties of the Nation! If the latter, *his Majesty should consider the sacred obligations he is bound to fulfil, and the duties he ought to discharge: he should recollect, that when he ceases to consult the interests and happiness of the People, he will cease to be respected; and that Justice is a debt which the Nation hath a right to demand from the Throne!*

"In vain do we boast of a Constitution, if its genuine principles be not actively alive in our bosoms; in vain do we talk of Rights, if we want courage and firmness to assert them. *The true Constitution of a Country is the undaunted spirit of its people!* The principles of Liberty must be established on the solid basis of rational conviction, and the virtues of Patriotism cherished and supported by continued exertion! When once the Citizens of Britain are become careless and indifferent about the preservation of their Rights, or the choice of their Representatives, from that moment arbitrary power is essentially introduced, and the utter extinction of individual liberty, and the establishment of general despotism, are inevitable and certain.

"To delineate a faithful portrait of the present awful situation of our poor distracted country, would only be to exhibit a scene of misery and desolation; a frightful picture of horror that would sicken the imagination, and appal the stoutest heart. The history of the few last months presents indeed to our view, a rapid succession of ill-fated mismanagement, unexampled calamities, and unparalleled disgrace! Baffled and defeated in every miserable project they have either designed or undertaken, Ministers seem determined to display their pre-eminent power of doing mischief; and as they cannot compass the ruin of France, to contrive at least the destruction of England! Emigrant Armies and Foreign Expeditions have been hastily planned, and equipped to ensure only to the one, an horrible and undistinguished carnage; to the other a premature and untimely grave! The manufacturer has been seduced from his loom—the militia-man swindled from his domestic employment—and the humble cottager kidnapped from the plough. The bread that should support the industrious Poor has been exported, either to be abandoned on a foreign shore, or consigned to the bottom of a merciless ocean—while the helpless widow and wretched orphan are consoled for their irreparable loss, by the scanty allowance of an insolent donation, or a charitable bribe!

"The comfortable and pleasing prospects resulting from an abundant harvest have turned out to be vain and fallacious. Monopoly, stimulated by insatiable avarice, and uncontrouled by those equitable laws, which we might expect from EQUAL REPRESENTATION, frustrates the beneficence of our seasons, and forbids the industrious Poor the immediate necessaries of life.

"What

"What is the cruel and insatiate monster that thus piece-meal tears and devours us?—Wherefore, in the midst of apparent plenty, are we thus compelled to starve?—Why, when we incessantly toil and labour, must we pine in misery and want?—What is this subtle and insinuating poison which thus vitiates our domestic comforts and destroys our public prosperity?—It is *Parliamentary Corruption*, which like a foaming whirlpool swallows the fruit of all our labours, and leaves us only the dregs of bitterness and sorrow.

Those whose duty it is to watch over the interests of the Nation, have either proved themselves indifferent to its welfare, or unable to remove the pressure of these intolerable grievances. Let them however be aware in time---Let *them* look to the fatal consequences—*We* are sincere friends of Peace—we want only *Reform:* because we are firmly and fully convinced, that a thorough Reform would effectually remedy these formidable evils: but we cannot answer for the strong and all powerful impulse of necessity, nor always restrain the aggravated feelings of insulted human nature!"---IF EVER THE BRITISH NATION SHOULD LOUDLY DEMAND STRONG AND DECISIVE MEASURES, WE BOLDLY ANSWER—"WE HAVE LIVES!" AND ARE READY TO DEVOTE THEM, EITHER SEPARATELY OR COLLECTIVELY, FOR THE SALVATION OF OUR COUNTRY."

"We trust, however, that *Reason* and *Remonstrance* are alone sufficient to produce the desired effects. We have laboured long, and we hope not unsuccessfully. Our numbers have increased beyond all human expectation: and many who once professed themselves our most inveterate enemies are now converted into sincere and faithful friends. A little more patience, and a little perseverance, Fellow Citizens, the business will be accomplished, and our triumphs complete. The LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY SHALL BE THE POWERFUL ORGAN TO USHER IN THE JOYFUL TIDINGS OF PEACE AND REFORM; AND UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS SHALL CROWN OUR SUCCESSFUL EXERTIONS!"

JOHN BINNS, Chairman.
JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary.

The reading of this Address was from time to time interrupted with such loud applauses as are but seldom heard, even in public places---and being ended amidst the warmest and most unanimous acclamations of approbation, the Chairman next proceeded to read,

THE REMONSTRANCE TO THE KING.

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble and earnest REMONSTRANCE *of Two Hundred Thousand, and upwards, faithful, though greatly aggrieved Subjects, associated and assembled with the* CORRESPONDING SOCIETY *of* London, *in a constitutional manner, in behalf of themselves and others.*

"SIRE!

"When the treacherous duplicity, and intolerable tyranny of the House of STUART had roused the long enduring patience of the British People, the expulsion of one restored into their hands the primitive right of chusing another, as their Chief of many Magistrates.

"At that period the privilege which we are now compelled by a sorrowful necessity to exercise, of addressing and remonstrating with the Chief Ma-

giftrate---ftating our grievances---and demanding redrefs, was (*fo far fortunately*) recognifed and folemnly eftablifhed.

"When, in effect of the failure of heirs to the national choice, and to the fucceeding Sovereign, her Majefty Queen ANNE, the exercife of the fame fundamental right again reverted to the People, and became in their opinion neceffary to fecure the liberties and happinefs of the nation, the head of that houfe from which you are defcended was called by the public will to the kingly office.

"The prefervation of thofe rights, re confirmed at the Revolution, was then more fully eftablifhed, and became part of the obligations, which George the Firft contracted to fulfil with the People of thefe realms; and your Predeceffor and your Majefty, upon fucceeding to the throne, became alike bound by the Sovereign law of the land to maintain them;---and it is in virtue of that folemn compact, and thereof only, that the good people of thefe nations are, or can be, bound in allegiance or refpect for their Magiftrate or your princely houfe.

"We fhall not particularize the fmallnefs of the majority which eftablifhed the Hanoverian fucceffion; but we fhould be wanting in that refpect which we owe to the virtues of our country, were we not to remind you, Sire, how *faithfully* and *fteadily* the nation has, to this hour, fupported the decifion of their Reprefentatives on that occafion; notwithftanding the well-grounded apprehenfions of invafion and civil war; in defpight of the intrigues of foreign Courts, and the jealoufies of potent Princes! againft the avowed fupporters of hereditary defcent; and even againft the opinions and efforts of others, *the friends of civil liberty*, within the bofom of the land, who drew from the ferious leffons of hiftorical experience, reafons the moft cogent againft foreign connections.

"Your Majefty, in your well known compaffion for the unfortunate defcendants of the expatriated King, has fatisfied your faithful fubjects how intimately acquainted you are with the fecret political hiftory of thofe times; and it will not, therefore, be neceffary for us to infift at large on the favours conferred by this country in tranfplanting your princely houfe from the poverty and obfcurity of Hanover, to the dignity and opulence of the then (*but not now*) moft refpectable Sovereignty in Europe.

"Your Majefty muft know all this; neither can you be ignorant, that the people of this country—often *too* SANGUINE—*too* CREDULOUS—entertained the well-grounded hope, *that an eternal gratitude would bind your houfe to fupport the freedom and happinefs of that nation, which had, under fuch great difficulties and dangers, conferred fuch fignal favours.*

"How far that honeft and juft hope has been realized, we leave to your Majefty's moft gracious and ferious confideration.

"Our prefent object is to renew a complaint which we delivered by way of Addrefs to your Majefty, into the hands of his Grace the Duke of PORTLAND, your Secretary of State, on the 15th day of July laft, wherein we befought your notice and relief in behalf of ourfelves and feveral thoufand others of your Majefty's unhappy fubjects, enduring all the calamities of a goading famine, and ftagnate trade; witneffing the increafe of bankruptcy, unequalled in extent or effect, but by profligate wafte of the public money—feeling for the deftruction of our induftrious youth, and the difgraces of our arms abroad, and for the infants, aged, and widows, lingering out a defperate and deplorable exiftence at home.

"We

We unfeignedly expreſſed our ſentiments of your Miniſters to your Majeſty therein, becauſe as we poſſeſs the beſt means of obtaining their real opinion, ſo we know the great body of the people think with us, "that under the abuſed ſanction of your prerogative, they have plunged this nation into all its preſent calamities, and continue to uphold themſelves in power, by a baleful ſyſtem of corruption, for the purpoſes of their ſelect avarice and ambition. We declared our ſerious apprehenſions for the tranquillity of the nation and the ſafety of your throne, were not thoſe Miniſters ſpeedily diſmiſſed; and that a Reform in Repreſentation alone could reſtore this Country to that native vigour and happineſs, of which it is capable but now deſtitute.

"But we have repreſented and prayed in vain!—and we have now to lament, that in addition to theſe national grievances, we have to complain that our Addreſs has not been attended to by your Majeſty's Servants, as we conceive it ſhould have been, in a manner ſuitable to the dignity of this country and your own high ſtation, nor with a decency becoming the character of public ſervants towards their fellow ſubjects, conſtitutionally exerciſing the right of petition on an occaſion of particular and ſerious moment.

"Under all the obligations of law and juſtice, are we then, Sire, *to ſuffer, and not to complain?* What have we not to fear, if there ſtands an impenetrable barrier between the oppreſſed and the magiſtrate?—Alas!—we hoped to find in the third Sovereign of the *Brunſwick line*, in theſe critical times, an example of Royal virtue; a proof of Princely gratitude; a powerful, though ſolitary argument, for the ſuperiority of our form of government.

"Is it in vain, that we wiſhed your Majeſty, no leſs intereſted than ourſelves in the iſſue of our prayer, to conſider *your own numerous family, and the vaſt debt and taxes*, with which this nation is encumbered—to call to mind *the duty which you owe to all and every of the Royal offspring and their progeny, as well as to the people, from whoſe induſtry alone the funds neceſſary for their princely ſupport can be drawn:* and to examine, by the teſt of hiſtory, whether ends ſo eſſential and indiſpenſible, are moſt likely to be accompliſhed by purſuing the reprobate meaſures of odious Miniſters, or by giving the people that Liberty, Peace, and Reform, which they ſeek, and which would aſſure their love, attachment and generoſity!

Liſten, then, Sire! to the voice of a wearied and afflicted people, whoſe grievances are ſo various that they diſtract, ſo enormous that they terrify. Think of the abyſs between ſupplication and deſpair!—The means of national ſalvation are in your own hands—it is our right to adviſe as well as ſupplicate: and we declare it to be our opinion, that a Reform in the Repreſentation of the People, the removal of your preſent Miniſters, and a ſpeedy PEACE, are the only means by which this country can be ſaved, or the attachment of the People ſecured."

Signed by Order of the Meeting,

J. BINNS, Chairman.

J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

This being received with an equally unanimous approbation, the Chairman then read the following RESOLUTIONS:

Reſolved,

Refolved,

1ft. That the prefent awful and alarming ftate of the Britifh empire, demands the ferious attention of our fellow countrymen.

2d. That its unexampled diftreffes call for immediate and effectual redrefs.

3d. That we are fully perfuaded the prefent exorbitant price of the neceffaries of life, (notwithftanding the late abundant harveft) is occafioned partly by the prefent ruinous war; but chiefly by that pernicious fyftem of monopoly, which derives protection from the mutilated and corrupt ftate of the Parliamentary Reprefentation.

4th. That the enormous load of taxes, under which this *almoft* ruined country groans, together with its unparalleled National Debt, (which has been and will be greatly increafed by the prefent war) threatens the Britifh nation with *total* ruin.

5th. That the inflexible obftinacy of Minifters in continuing the prefent cruel, unjuft, and difgraceful war—a war which has ftained the earth and feas with fo much human blood—calls aloud for the execration of every friend of humanity.

6th. That the prefent government of France, is as capable of maintaining the *accuftomed relations of peace and amity* with the King of Great Britain, as with the Elector of Hanover.

7th. That we remain fully convinced that the permanent peace, welfare and happinefs of this country, can be eftablifhed only by reftoring to our fellow countrymen their natural and undoubted rights, UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE and ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS.

8th. That we are determined, at the next general elections, to fupport fuch candidates only, as will pledge themfelves to promote UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE and ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS.

9th. That the evafive conduct of his Majefty's Minifters refpecting our late Addrefs, convinces us that our fellow countrymen have little to hope from the executive part of our government.

10th. That we believe the period is not far diftant, when Britons muft no longer depend upon any party of men for the recovery of their liberties.

11th. THAT THE ONLY HOPE OF THE PEOPLE IS IN THEMSELVES.

12th. That the publicity of our conduct evinces the purity of our intentions, and is a teftimony of our love of peace, and of the facrifices we would make to fpare the blood of our fellow countrymen.

13th. That the events of every day are clearly proving we have gained the good opinion of our fellow countrymen, notwithftanding the oppofition of our perfecutors and calumniators.

14th. That in order the more effectually to obtain the co-operation and affiftance of the whole country, deputies fhall be fent from the Society to the principal towns in the kingdom, for the purpofe of explaining to our fellow countrymen the neceffity of affociating, as the only means of procuring a Parliamentary Reform.

15th. That ftrong in the purity of our intentions and the goodnefs of our caufe—regardlefs of the calumny and threats of our enemies—we again folemnly pledge ourfelves to the Britifh nat[illegible] ever to defert the facred caufe

cauſe in which we are engaged, until we have obtained the grand object our purſuit.

J. BINNS, Chairman.
J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

After the Chairman had finiſhed reading the preceding Reſolutions,

CITIZEN THELWALL roſe, and delivered his ſentiments at conſiderable length. He began by ſtating in a clear and definitive manner, the reaſons why he had withdrawn himſelf from the Society, which were principally the intenſe application and inceſſant exertion demanded by the duties of that ſituation which he filled as an individual; and, ſecondly, what appeared to him a neceſſary precaution both for the ſake of the Society and himſelf; as, upon the modern ſyſtem of *Conſtructive* Treaſons, he might, perhaps, be rendered reſponſible for actions he had no opportunity to take any ſhare in, and the Society for *his* ſentiments, or the conſequences of his individual exertions. At the ſame time, however, he appealed to the whole tenor of his conduct to prove, that he had not ſhrunk in the leaſt from any ſentiment to which he had formerly pledged himſelf, and that he had "always retained the moſt inviolable attachment to the principles for which we aſſociate."

"I do not think (continued he) that any individual is called upon to ſacrifice the private intereſts of himſelf and his family, unleſs by ſo doing he can perform an eſſential ſervice to the public cauſe. But if, when Liberty can be eſſentially ſerved, any man conſider wife, children, or ſelf, dearer than the public, what is he but one of thoſe proſtituted wretches, who, inſtead of being moved by the generous enthuſiaſm of principle, are enſlaved by the ſordid views of intereſt and corruption?"

He then proceeded to explain that his principal motive for attending this Meeting was to point out the neceſſity of uniting the moſt ſteady determination to preſerve peace and order, with the moſt enthuſiaſtic determination to perſevere in the Cauſe of Liberty and Parliamentary Reform; and, above all, to warn them to be aware of the artifices of ſpies and agents of Adminiſtration, who might endeavour to excite tumults and diſturbances, in order thereby to furniſh Government with a pretence to adopt arbitrary and tyrannical meaſures, and eſtabliſh a military deſpotiſm.

"Let it not, however, be ſuppoſed that while I wiſh to recommend to you a ſcrupulous reſpect for peace and order, that I wiſh to repreſs the generous ardour and enthuſiaſm in behalf of liberty, with which I know your boſoms are at this time burning. No, Citizens, I would increaſe that enthuſiaſm, I would diſſeminate that ardour, and I would ſteel with tenfold fortitude that determination which I know you feel—that reſolution with which I know you have all ſolemnly ſworn, upon the altar of your own generous hearts, to live free or die! I would fan, not extinguiſh, that ſacred fire of freedom, which ſhould glow in every boſom—"flame in the breath, and lighten in the eyes" of all who call themſelves Britons!—nay, of all who wear the form of man! But I am convinced, Citizens, that the moſt ardent enthuſiaſm in the cauſe of liberty is perfectly conſiſtent with the utmoſt zeal for humanity and benevolence."

He then proceeded to ſhew the neceſſity of avoiding perſonal factions and animoſities, and keeping the mind continually bent towards the inveſti-

gation

gation of *facts* and *principles*, by which alone they could learn to underſtand their rights and know how to obtain redreſs: and he illuſtrated the importance of this by ſhewing how France, by being led by faction, ſuſpicion, and ambitious intrigue, had ſpilt its beſt blood in domeſtic broils and tumults, and loſt at laſt the right of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE and ANNUAL PARLIAMENTS, the *eſſential barrier* of the glorious ſyſtem of political equality:—the equality of rights—not of property; which laſt he ſhewed to be impoſſible!

After amplifying upon this ſubject to a very conſiderable degree, and tracing the progreſs of corruption, and conſequent increaſe of human miſery; after ſtating ſome facts, and alluding to many others which have been amply detailed in his lectures, and which altogether demonſtrated the fact, that *a man muſt now pay the price of upwards of four days labour for the ſame quantity of food and raiment, which three hundred years ago, notwithſtanding the difference of wages, he could have bought for the price of the labour of one day*, he proceeded to ſtate an objection to the following paſſage—" The " comfortable proſpects of an abundant harveſt have turned out to be vain " and fallacious, *and were probably held out to lull the public mind into a delu-* " *ſive and fatal ſecurity*."

The words here printed in Italics appeared to him to convey a cenſure on the pacific forbearance of the people; and " whatever has kept the mind in a ſtate of tranquillity (ſays he) I pronounce to be good—good for the cauſe of liberty—good for us all. If the expectation of a good harveſt has occaſioned you to avoid tumult, violence, and inſurrection, ſo much the better for liberty—ſo much the worſe for rotten borough-mongers and the tools and promoters of oppreſſion. For every day of peace and reaſon is an important acceſſion to our cauſe. It is, therefore, that I wiſh thoſe words to be omitted: becauſe they ſeem to convey a cenſure upon the tranquility we have hitherto preſerved, and which I hope we ſhall ſtill preſerve—becauſe I am ſure that tranquillity muſt ſecure the triumph of liberty, and the attainment of Annual Parliaments and Univerſal Suffrage."

This he afterwards enforced in a ſpeech from the other ſide of the tribune. " I cannot aſſent to theſe epithets—I believe it to be a glorious tranquillity—a tranquillity happy to us, and to the cauſe we are engaged in —becauſe every day that we go on in the courſe of reaſon and enquiry— every day that we can keep clear of violence and tumult, we increaſe in our ſtrength. I therefore approve of whatever has kept the people in a ſtate of tranquillity, becauſe, in addition to the abhorrence which every humane and good man muſt feel for the diſmal conſequences of commotion, I ſee that the conſequence of that tranquillity is that the cauſe of liberty is growing with a rapidity unequalled, and is becoming, indeed, like that grain of muſtard-ſeed, talked about in a certain book, which though ſmall in its beginning is now becoming an immenſe tree, covering all the nations of the earth; and to all the nations of the earth, if we give it but the manure of peace and manly inveſtigation, promiſing the fruits of happineſs and virtue, and of every thing that is dear to the heart of man."

A further detail is perfectly unneceſſary; as Mr. THELWALL was accompanied by a ſhort-hand writer; and the Speech at large is now printed and in circulation. For the ſame reaſon we make no abſtract of the ſpeeches he afterwards delivered at the other tribunes.

After

After CITIZEN THELWALL had fat down, CITIZEN HODGSON arofe, and addreffed the Meeting in the following manner:

" CITIZENS,

" I fhould with the utmoft readinefs have feconded the motion juft now made, but that it does not in my opinion go far enough: the claufe of the Addrefs which is propofed to be amended is of the utmoft importance, and it is a duty we owe to ourfelves and our country to fpeak our opinions on it, in the moft open and explicit manner.

" During the whole of this autumn we have been affured that an abundant harveft would in fome degree repair the effects of that impoverifhing, that ruinous dearth, which we have fuffered for more than a year paft.

" But within thefe few days this hope of abundance has vanifhed; and we are taught to believe the harveft has failed:—If this is really the cafe, the Addrefs as it now ftands may perhaps be as proper as any thing which can be faid on the fubject.—But if the contrary is the fact; if we have had an abundant harveft, we fhould by paffing the Addrefs as it now ftands, only prove to the world that we have been duped by the artifices of monopolizers.

" On a fubject fo very interefting to the happinefs of your families, I doubt not moft of you have made fome degree of enquiry.

" I have converfed with three or four very intelligent perfons, who have been confiderable journeys fince the weather took that favourable turn, which has fince been uninterrupted, and their concurring teftimony has implanted in my mind a ftrong belief that we have had a very plentiful harveft. (Here a general cry, " a good harveft.")

" CITIZEN THELWALL has been fome time in the country, but I have not had any opportunity of learning what his opinion is on this queftion, otherwife than as it appears to be implied in the amendment he has juft propofed; but, as I have already faid, we ought to be explicit—If therefore, his belief on this fubject coincides with mine, I hope he will, by feconding the amendment which I am about to propofe, fuperfede the neceffity of putting the queftion on the amendment propofed by him. In this hope I move, that not only the words which he has recited fhall be expunged, but that the following be inferted in their place.

" Monopoly, ftimulated by infatiable avarice, and uncontrouled by " thofe equitable laws which we might expect from equal reprefentation, " fruftrates the beneficence of our feafons, and forbids the induftrious poor " the immediate neceffaries of life."

" Permit me, before I conclude, to offer my opinion on the fource of this evil. It forms a part of the object for which we have affociated.

" I believe the endeavours which were ufed fome time ago, to fix on this Society the appellation of Levellers, muft be within the recollection of moft of us.—It is certainly matter of exultation, that the juftice and purity of our principles have fo completely triumphed over that infinuation, that it is now no longer heard of.—But Citizens, I begin to fear that in the refutation of this calumny, we are in danger of running into an oppofite extreme—in danger of fuffering ourfelves to relinquifh the freedom of enquiry, as to the degree of refpect which *property* has a right to claim.—

As

As it relates to moral character, it is a presumptive, and *only* a presumptive evidence of industry and œconomy. But supposing these must necessarily accompany property, surelythey are not the only virtues required in a representative. If I were required to describe the necessary qualifications of a good representative, and you were at leisure to hear me, I might enlarge on every article in the catalogue of moral and political virtues, and possibly on some points I might find myself thwarted by difference of opinion.

All the time will allow, and indeed all I wish to say on that subject, is—They who are to be represented, are the only proper judges of what qualifications their representatives ought to possess.

If we were to extend our supposition yet further;—if we were to lay aside property as a certain token of respectability, even that would not justify the restriction which is imposed on the people of this country, I mean that of chusing for their *nominal* representatives none but men of *landed* property. I have never been able to discover any thing but sophistry in whatever has been advanced in support of this distinction—a distinction replete with injustice to the commercial and manufacturing interests: To me it appears the great cause of the end now under consideration, for by whatever means the price of the produce of land is raised, the ultimate effect is, to raise the rent and price of the land itself; and while land-holders are suffered exclusively to possess the legislature of the country, they may make cobweb laws, to amuse the ignorant with paltry inefficient regulations of imports and exports: but it is vain to hope they will ever destroy the source of their un-earned wealth, by giving a sufficient curb to monopoly.

He concluded by repeating the amendment before proposed."

Several other Citizens addressed the Meeting from the other tribunes; but from the length of their speeches, as well as the restricted limits of this narrative, a detail cannot here be given.

Citizen J. G. Jones concluded the business of the day, in a speech of infinite ability and considerable length, to which, for the reasons before assigned, we cannot do ample justice, and therefore will not attempt to detail.

The Chairman having left the Chair, a motion was made and seconded;

"That the thanks of the Meeting be given to the Chairman for his manly, spirited and judicious conduct in the business of this day."

A motion was also made and seconded,

"That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Citizens Jones, Thelwall, Hodgson, &c. &c. for their exertions this day."

Both these motions were unanimously past, amidst the greatest acclamations. A little after five o'clock the Meeting broke up, when the immense company that was present separated, and proceeded to their respective homes: the utmost harmony, regularity and good order prevailed during the whole time, each and every individual seeming to be impressed with the idea, that it was a day

SACRED TO LIBERTY.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11.

THE order of the day for the Houſe to reſolve itſelf into a Committee of the whole Houſe, on the Bill for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts, being moved, it was read accordingly, and the Lord Chancellor having left the Woolſack, Lord Walſingham took his ſeat at the table.

The preamble having been agreed to be poſtponed, their Lordſhips proceeded to fill up the blanks and amend the clauſes of the Bill. Lord Grenville moved to omit the words, "or malicious and adviſed ſpeaking," which was agreed to.

THE DUKE OF LEEDS moved, by way of amendment, to inſert certain words of the ſtatute of the 25th Edward III. in order to render the charging of an Overt Act of Treaſon in the indictment, and declaring it neceſſary for that Act to be proved in evidence by two witneſſes of the ſame condition with the perſon indicted, previous to conviction.

This amendment gave riſe to a long and learned diſcuſſion, in which Lord Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Chief Juſtice Kenyon took part. The law of Treaſons was the principal ſubject of argument; and much of the argument turned on the queſtion, how far it was requiſite to expreſs in the Act that an Overt Act ſhould be charged in the indictment for High Treaſon, and of the criminal extent of words? It was agreed on all hands that mere looſe words did not conſtitute an Overt Act of Treaſon, but thas words coupled with an action corroborative of the deſign or menace to kill the King, expreſſed in ſuch words, was an Overt Act of Treaſon, and capable of being ſo charged in an indictment for compaſſing the death of the King. Lord Coke, Lord Chief Juſtice Hale, Judge Keeling, and Judge Foſter, were the authorities cited by each noble Speaker.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE pointed out a part of the clauſe preceding that which the noble Duke and the learned Lords had been ſpeaking to, that in his mind called for the inſertion of ſome words of explanation. He wiſhed to know, whether the kingdom of Corſica was to be conſidered as annexed to the crown of Great Britain, or as belonging to George the IIId. and his heirs and ſucceſſors. He conceived, that if Miniſters came to ne-

gociate with the French, as they had professed every inclination to do, formally acknowledging Corsica to be annexed to the crown of Great Britain, might be the means of retarding, or, indeed, might prove a bar to the return of peace; and yet it should appear by this Bill, as it now stood, that Corsica was formally annexed to the dominions of his Majesty, by that part of the clause immediately before the Committee, which makes it treasonable to depose the Sovereign "from the style, honour, or kingly name, of the Imperial Crown of this realm, or *any other* of his Majesty's *dominions* or countries." His wish was, in order to remove the possibility of any obstacle, such as he had described, standing in the way of a negociation, to introduce a clause to except from the penalties of this part of the Bill, the attempts to depose his Majesty from the kingdom of Corsica, or any of his dominions gained since the war.

LORD GRENVILLE said, the words objected to by the noble Earl were perfectly clear and intelligible, and that notwithstanding the noble Earl's ingenuity, in endeavouring to have it conceived that the present Bill, or any part of it, would bear upon any negociation for peace that might take place, it would not have that effect in any possible case.

After some farther conversation, Lord Lauderdale withdrew his amendment.

At length the DUKE of LEEDS withdrew his amendment, and the Lord Chancellor moved that the words "or other Overt Act," should be inserted after the words "any printing, writing," which was agreed to.

Upon the second clause, the DUKE of LEEDS moved, that, in the expression, "established Government and Constitution of this Realm," there should be omitted the words, "Government and," meaning afterwards, his Grace said, to move to insert the words "consisting of King, Lords, and Commons," as he conceived, the constitution so defined, would perfectly answer the purpose of the Bill, and exclude the possibility of misconstruction.

LORD GRENVILLE said, he was not aware that the word "Government" was of so vague and indefinite a nature, as to render it likely to create doubts upon the meaning of the clause; if, however, the noble Duke and the House were of that opinion, he saw at present no objection to the words suggested by the noble Duke.

THE

The Lord Chancellor ſaid, he was rather inclined to think, that the amendment of the noble Duke would tend to create that very confuſion which it was intended to prevent. He, however, did not pretend to give a decided opinion upon the ſubject, but merely ſpoke from the firſt impreſſion which the propoſition had made upon his mind. If theſe words were inſerted, it would be neceſſary, in framing an indictment upon this Bill, to introduce the very words of it, and to ſay, that ſuch an act was done, or words ſpoken, with intent to deſtroy, &c. the conſtitution, conſiſting of King, Lords, and Commons.

If the law ſtood ſo, it would be eaſy to write a moſt atrocious libel with impunity from this Bill. For inſtance, he might write thus, "the conſtitution of England conſiſts of King, Lords, and Commons, but I do not like an hereditary monarchy, it is an abſurdity. I think an hereditary Houſe of Lords ſtill worſe; and I think the Commons ſhould be choſen in a very different manner; I would have an elective monarchy, and the dignity of peerage ſhould be granted only for life, or for a Seſſion of Parliament." Here was an inſtance of a man admitting the conſtitution, as conſiſting of King, Lords, and Commons, and yet deſtroying the very foundation of the conſtitution. He only ſtated this as illuſtrative, a doubt that ſtruck him upon the ſudden, not having really had time to turn it in his mind ſufficiently to decide upon it; he therefore wiſhed the noble Duke would poſtpone his amendment, to enable their Lordſhips to conſider the effect of it.

Lord Thurlow ſaid, it was difficult to define, with logical accuracy, the terms Government and Conſtitution. He reprobated with great ſeverity the attempt to vilify or degrade the perſon of his Majeſty, which he reckoned a ſubject too ſacred for petulant and wanton attacks. But he conſidered the operation of the penal enactment of this clauſe as too ſevere in many caſes to which it might be applied. Was it a matter of ſuch criminality as that to which he had alluded, to ſay that it was an abuſe that 20 acres of land below Old Sarum Hill ſhould ſend two Repreſentatives to Parliament? Yet, this might be repreſented as tending to create a diſlike of the eſtabliſhed conſtitution, ſince under it ſuch a caſe exiſted. He was decidedly of opinion that the preſent laws of the country were fully adequate to the puniſhment and reſtraint of the crimes which this clauſe was meant to embrace. It was not, he thought, from the want of proper laws that dangerous principles had been diſſeminated, and had aſſumed a threatening aſpect, but becauſe theſe laws had not been employed by the executive power to remedy the evil, and to puniſh the offenders.

 New

New Acts and ſevere penalties he thought little calculated to attain the object propoſed. He was convinced in his own mind, and his opinion was confirmed by the authority of the ſtatute-book, that ſevere penal laws can never conduce to the ſafety of a prince, or the preſervation of any conſtitution. A jury would be inclined to acquit a perſon proſecuted under the penalties of this Bill, who was guilty of the facts in the indictment, rather than expoſe him to tranſportation to Botany-Bay for ſeven years. It was by accommodating the ſeverity of puniſhment to the magnitude of the offence, and by properly exerciſing the moderate penalties of the laws, in every caſe which occurred, that crimes were to be reſtrained. In adverting to the ſucceeding clauſe of the Bill, which places the power of proſecution in the diſcretion of the Miniſters, his Lordſhip obſerved, that though he would not believe or ſuſpect that the preſent Adminiſtration could convert to an improper uſe any authority with which they might be inveſted, there was much danger that in future it might be miſapplied. The Miniſter might chooſe to protect one culprit, while he launched the whole vengeance of the law upon another. He might even employ, for ſiniſter purpoſes, creatures to commit treſpaſſes under this Bill, from the puniſhment of which he might wiſh to ſhield them, or even in the caſe of a conviction, where he might prevent the puniſhment it inflicted. He was therefore againſt the whole clauſe.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR ſaid, that he was ſurpriſed at the opinion which the learned Lord had expreſſed. The magnitude of the crimes againſt which this clauſe was directed, muſt be obvious to every Lord who read or heard of the publications which the preſs teemed with, and which were diſtributed daily through the ſtreets. In their conſequences and utmoſt extent they aimed at the ſubverſion of every part of the conſtitution. They taught the people that royalty was a uſurpation of their rights, and an ariſtocracy a nuiſance to which they ſhould not ſubmit. They laboured to perſuade them that they had no political exiſtence, that they were ſlaves, and that they ought to aſſert their importance; and menaced the ſame evils which this country had once experienced, and of which a neighbouring nation afforded a diſtinct example. Were ſuch enormities, which aimed at the vitals of the conſtitution, too rigorouſly puniſhed by the penalties of this Bill?

LORD MANSFIELD ſupported the opinion of the Lord Chancellor.

LORD LAUDERDALE ſaid, that nothing he had heard had effaced the impreſſion made on his mind by the excellent obſervations of the learned Lord (Thurlow). Inſtead of meeting the argument

of his learned Friend, the noble Lord had painted in glowing colours the atrocious tendency of the publications in circulation, and had defcanted with great eloquence, and with a judicious feafonablenefs upon the evils which fuch principles had produced in France, as if the learned Lord (Thurlow) had been infenfible of the criminality of the conduct of fuch men, and indifferent to the effects it might produce. The learned Lord had demonftrated upon general principles, and upon the authority of the Statute Book, which he had ftrengthened by his own opinion, that the rigorous penalties in the Bill would counteract its intention, would be favourable to the caufe it was meant to extinguifh, and would defeat the views of juftice. To none of thefe points had a fatisfactory anfwer been given. He had intended to move, that this whole claufe fhould be omitted; but, at any rate, he wifhed, if it were to be retained, that it fhould be extended to Scotland; for, did not the epithets of cruel and rigorous, which had been applied to the penalties it enacted by his learned Friend, ftill reverberate in his ear, he would have called mild and gentle the provifions it contained, and mild they certainly were, in comparifon of the fyftem of the criminal law to which that country was now expofed.

Anticipating, as the learned Lord (Thurlow) had done, the provifion which placed in the hands of Minifters the power of profecutions, he faid that it was unneceffary to impute in imagination greater mifchiefs to the prefent Minifters than their conduct had in reality produced. It was eafy to conceive that there might be men at the head of affairs in this country who would be difpofed to punifh with fury the perfon who attacked one branch of the conftitution, while they would cherifh the libeller of the other. Some one might reprefent the monarchy as independent of the Parliament. Such an offender might find his fafety from the punifhment of this Bill in the fimilarity of fentiments of the Minifters, and might fecurely ftrike at the foundation of two parts of the conftitution, while he proved his zeal and attachment to the Throne. The different opinions of Whig and Tory might be the fubject of fupport, or of profcription. A period might exift when, as in the prefent days, the principles which placed his Majefty on the throne would be detefted as the fymptoms of difaffection, while the advocates of prerogative might find their abettors in the bofom of the Cabinet. The Bill would, in fhort, put it in the power of any Minifter to punifh only thofe attacks on the conftitution, and even to perfecute thofe doctrines which were obnoxious to themfelves, and enable them to protect thofe opinions which, though agree- able

able to their own ſentiment, were hoſtile to the principles of the conſtitution.

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER ſpoke in favour of the clauſe, and of every part of the Bill, without going into any abſtract queſtions about the borough of Old Sarum, or any other place. He conceived the Bill to be neceſſary, becauſe any attack againſt either of the three branches of the Legiſlature was equally dangerous and criminal, and if Miniſters did any thing that was wrong, they were reſponſible for what they did.

LORD GRENVILLE replied to what had fallen from Lord Lauderdale and Lord Thurlow, and expreſſed a wiſh that the noble and learned Lord had not left the Houſe immediately after having made ſuch obſervations as they had juſt heard. He pleaded the reſponſibility of Miniſters, and gave, as a reaſon for adopting the clauſe, that there were libels daily againſt the Government and Conſtitution, for which there was yet no adequate puniſhment. On the clauſe for tranſportation, he believed he would make ſome alteration, but he ſaw no reaſon for agreeing to the noble Duke's amendment. The amendment was then put and negatived.

THE DUKE OF LEEDS then moved to leave out the words "King, Lords, and Commons," which, after a ſhort converſation, he agreed to withdraw, intimating at the ſame time a wiſh to debate the ſame part of the Bill upon the report.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE ſaid, that the queſtion moved by the noble Duke being diſpoſed of, he felt it his duty to anſwer the remark of the noble Lord, when he ſtated the impropriety of his noble and learned friend having left the Houſe. He defended the noble and learned Lord from any charge of diſreſpect to the Houſe, and as little of any wiſh to avoid the diſcuſſion of ſuch a queſtion. His great experience and ability, the decorum and reſpect with which he had ſo long preſided in that Houſe, and the particular ſtrength of argument which he had that day uſed, were ſufficient grounds for his defence, even if they did not know that his ſtate of health was ſuch that it prevented him from remaining ſo long as he himſelf wiſhed, or ſo long as from his great ability, not only he, but the Houſe would wiſh for his preſence.—If the reſponſibility ſo much talked of meant any thing that could immediately affect the perſons, characters, or fortunes of the Miniſters, they all knew how enquiries tending to that iſſue had been treated, particularly ſince the preſent Miniſters had been in power; and here he muſt repeat what he had ſaid on a former night, and what never could be forgotten, as coming from a noble Duke now high in office (the Duke of Portland) that he ſincerely believed that much of

of the calamities and diſtreſſes under which the country ſuffered was owing to the miſconduct of the perſons now in office.

The Lord Chancellor regretted that he ſhould ever have to remark upon any thing diſorderly in that Houſe, though he certainly could not admit that the noble and learned Lord had been perfectly in order. After having advanced opinions upon clauſes of the Bill which were afterwards to be diſcuſſed, it was but reaſonable and juſt that he ſhould have waited till he had underſtood whether thoſe opinions were confirmed or controverted. He was ſenſible how weak it was in him to make any obſervations upon the ſpeech of that noble and learned Lord who had preceded him upon the Woolſack, and whom he followed as cloſely as he could, though *haud paſſibus equis*; but there were ſome parts of it in which he could not help differing in opinion. Inſtead of diſapproving of the clauſe, in which it is provided that no perſon ſhall be proſecuted unleſs it be by order of the King or of his Council, he admired it becauſe it removed the odium from attaching to any particular individual, and made his Majeſty's Secretary of State, and the various perſons who compoſed his Council, reſponſible for the indictment of every perſon. So far then from its being an engine in the hands of Government to accelerate any ſummary proceſs, it became a check upon the Government, and retarded the proſecution. It had been objected alſo by another noble Lord, that too much diſcretionary power was entruſted to the Secretaries of State in leaving them the liberty to proſecute or not, as they ſhould think proper; but ſurely the noble and learned Lord, as well as the noble Earl, had forgotten that as the law now ſtands, there is a ſimilar diſcretion in the office and authority of the Attorney General. The Attorney General at preſent may file an information againſt any perſon whom he thinks cognizable, and may afterwards follow it up with an indictment, and then with a writ of *noli proſequi* all further proceedings may be quaſhed. Thus then it was clear that the clauſe was both neceſſary and well planned, ſince it prevented any individual from incurring blame, which the Attorney General might now do if he were to exert his authority, while it involved the Secretaries of State, and every perſon who compoſed his Majeſty's Privy Council, who would of courſe be cautious how they acted.

Lord Lauderdale imagined that the noble Lord ſuppoſed his noble and learned friend had loſt the uſe of his faculties with his health, and no longer remembered any thing of the law or conſtitution of the country. Of courſe his noble and learned friend was not ignorant of the power and authority of the Attorney General

neral to file an information, follow it up with an indictment, and afterwards abandon it with a writ of *Noli Prosequi*. But his noble and learned friend very wisely remonstrated against the entrusting such a discretionary power to his Majesty's Ministers or Privy Council, not because they might first commence and afterwards abandon a prosecution by *Noli Prosequi*, when they found they had not sufficient proofs of crimination, but because they were at liberty to prosecute upon any trifling misdemeanor, where they were prejudiced, while they passed over offences of more magnitude with impunity. Indeed, he had rather the power should still have remained with the Attorney General, for he was a man that had been used to exercise his reason, to examine and compare facts, and then draw his conclusions, whereas the persons who formed his Majesty's Privy Council were by habit disposed to see things through a medium. He never therefore could be convinced of the benefit or propriety of such a clause, and consequently gave it his decided opposition.

The Lord Chancellor said he never hoped to convince the noble Earl, but begged leave to state, that any person under an indictment of treason, or sedition, was already as much under the direction and controul of his Majesty's Ministers and Privy Council as they could be after the passing of this Bill, for after the Attorney General has framed the indictment, it is not in his power to stop the proceedings, unless authorized by the sign manual of his Majesty so to do.

Lord Caernarvon hoped that this Bill would not do away the authority of the House of Commons to impeach any Minister who should maliciously and advisedly incite or stir up the people to the hatred or dislike of his Majesty or the constitution. He understood that the House of Commons maintained this authority, but with what right he was not able to determine, and therefore, as it was necessary the Bill should be clear and explicit, he wished that to be explained; for there was as much mischief to be apprehended from Ministers as from other persons.

The Lord Chancellor informed the noble Lord that there is no criminal proceeding against a Minister but by impeachment, and that although an impeachment might originate in the House of Commons, it must be tried before their Lordships. Therefore the law in such cases remains precisely as it was, and this Bill has nothing to do with it.

Lord Lauderdale objected to the present form of the amendment, as it had destroyed one material condition in the original

ginal clauſe, that of limiting the duration of the puniſhment to the term of ſeven years.

LORD GRENVILLE ſaid there was no neceſſity to mention any fixed time of puniſhment, as by leaving the whole to the diſcretion of the Judges there was but little doubt that they would rather ſhorten than extend it.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR ſaid it was uſual to limit the duration of puniſhment in the Act.

The amendment was after ſome converſation agreed to and ſtands as follows:

"And if any perſon or perſons ſhall, after being ſo convicted, "offend a ſecond time, and be thereupon convicted, before any "commiſſion of oyer and terminer, or goal delivery, or in his Ma-"jeſty's Court of King's Bench, ſuch perſon or perſons may, on ſuch "ſecond conviction, be adjudged at the diſcretion of the Court, "either to be baniſhed this realm, or to be tranſported to ſuch "place, as ſhall be appointed by his Majeſty for the tranſportation "of offenders, for ſuch term as the Court may appoint, not ex-"ceeding ſeven years."

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD ſaid, he could not let the clauſe paſs without giving it his decided oppoſition.—He looked upon it as a daring attack and flagitious outrage on the liberty of the ſubject, and felt as a man that might incur the penalty in making this declaration. He then adverted to the obſervations of a noble Prelate, and in contradiſtinction to him, conceived every borough a component part of the Houſe of Commons, and every law a component part of the conſtitution. Otherwiſe, according to the opinions of the noble Prelate, a man might firſt write or ſpeak againſt the repreſentation of the borough of Old Sarum with impunity, and ſo go on ſingly, from borough to borough, and from county to county, till he had ſhewn that the whole ſyſtem of the repreſentation of the Houſe of Commons was corrupt, and upon this principle he concurred in the ſentiments of a noble Earl for the proviſion of a clauſe to prevent Miniſters from deſtroying that branch of the Legiſlature, or in other words, exciting or ſtirring up the people to the hatred or diſlike of the conſtitution; for to ſuch tendencies they are in general too prone.

LORD DARNLEY ſpoke in favour of the Bill.

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER thanked the noble Duke for the honour he had done him in noticing what he ſaid, and offered a fuller explanation upon it, in which he conceived if any perſon were ſo to proceed through the whole ſtate of the repreſentation of the Houſe of Commons, or through all the laws and ſtatutes of the country, as to ſuggeſt a general concluſion, that the govern-

 ment

ment was corrupt, he would incur the penalties of this Bill. Common ſpeculative and philoſophical diſquiſitions, he ſaid, however, might be ſtill written and publiſhed, though he always thought they did more harm than good, for the Bill was merely directed againſt thoſe idle and ſeditious public meetings for the diſcuſſion of the laws, where the people were not competent to decide upon them. In fact he did not know what the maſs of the people in any country had to do with the laws, but to obey them.

LORD LAUDERDALE ſaid a ſhort ſpeech required a ſhort anſwer. He ſhould have ſuppoſed the noble Prelate had been educated in a foreign country and not in England, when he declared that he did not know what the people had to do with laws, but to obey them. If he had been in Turkey and heard ſuch a declaration from the mouth of a Mufti, he ſhould have attributed it to his ignorance, the deſpotic government of his country, or his religious doctrines, but to hear a Britiſh Prelate in a Britiſh Houſe of Parliament declare, that he did not know what the people had to do with laws but to obey them, filled him with wonder and aſtoniſhment.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD remembered to have heard the noble Prelate acknowledge that he was not profoundly acquainted with our conſtitution, and ſo it appeared from ſuch a declaration. He begged leave, however, to inform the noble Prelate, that the right of the people to aſſemble and diſcuſs the laws was the peculiar character, and was an eſſential part of the conſtitution, and that by deſtroying that, they would deſtroy the greateſt bulwark of the conſtitution. He referred to the meetings of the people, upon the repeal of the Shop Tax, as an inſtance, among an innumerable quantity of others if neceſſary; and obſerved, that otherwiſe he ſhould himſelf have incurred the penalty of the law, for conjoining his name with many others in an advertiſement for an Aſſembly to be held to-morrow, to deliberate, and diſcuſs the preſent Bill.

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER explained, by ſtating, that any certain body of individuals who felt themſelves particularly oppreſſed by any partial law, he conceived, had a right to meet and repreſent their grievances to the Legiſlature, as the ſnuff manufacturers formerly did on the exciſe of ſnuff, and the Weſt India Planters againſt the abolition of the Slave Trade.

The Houſe then divided on the clauſe.

Contents	—	—	45
Not Contents	—	—	3
			42

After a ſhort converſation the Houſe was reſumed, and notice given that the Report of the Committee would be received to-morrow.—Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A PETITION of the Mayor, Aldermen, Affiftants, and Common Council of the Borough of Colchefter, was prefented by Sir George Jackfon, fetting forth that the Petitioners are fhocked at, and view with the utmoft abhorrence, the outrages lately committed againft the facred perfon of his Majefty, by a wicked and lawlefs fet of mifcreants, at the very moment that his Majefty was in the execution of his high function in the conftitution, that of opening the Parliament, that the Petitioners cannot help confidering it as a violent infraction on the privileges of Parliament, and which wretches they confider as the vile agents of fome more ambitious and evil defigning perfons, enemies not only to the beft of Kings, but to the wifeft of all governments, firmly believing that thefe diabolical attempts were made in confequence of fome premeditated defigns and wicked determinations, formed at thofe feminaries of fedition, the affociations for political debates, lectures, and clubs, held in London and in divers parts of the country. Impreffed with thefe ideas, the Petitioners feel it a duty they owe to the beft of conftitutions, and to themfelves, moft earneftly to requeft the Houfe to take into their moft ferious confideration the origin of thefe grievances, and, if the Houfe fhall find the laws are not fufficiently energetic, in their prefent ftate, to prevent the repetition of fuch horrid attempts, the Petitioners implore the Houfe to take fuch meafures, either by a review and alteration of the old laws, or by the formation of new ones, as the Houfe in their wifdom, fhall think moft likely to afford complete protection to his Majefty's perfon and family, and alfo to prevent, if poffible, all feditious meetings in future.

A Petition of a fimilar tendency was prefented from the borough of Great Yarmouth.—Ordered to be laid on the table.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

ASSOCIATED LIVERY OF LONDON.

GENTLEMEN, *London, Nov. 9, 1795.*

AT a General Meeting of the Affociation you empowered me, whenever the fituation of public affairs required it, to affemble you together. If ever there was occafion for you to collect yourfelves together, this is the crifis, when fedition ftalks abroad in open day, and when the enemies of our happy Conftitution have public meetings in almoft every part of this great town, at which are debated queftions of a feditious tendency, for the purpofe of contaminating the minds of the public, and to leffen that refpect and veneration every good fubject ought to have for the perfon of our moft gracious Sovereign. And the late moft daring, wicked, and diabolical attempt made on his moft facred perfon, calls forth every defcription of perfons to come forward in defence of our King, and in fupport of our happy Conftitution.

Conſtitution. Your aſſociating together have greatly contributed in ſuppreſſing a party ſpirit that had for ſome time diſturbed the peace of the city, which ſpirit ſeems to be reviving, and if not checked will produce the ſame effect; I have, therefore, conſiſtent with the power you were pleaſed to repoſe in me, thought it my duty to aſſemble you together on the late moſt daring outrage on his Majeſty's perſon. I am, Gentlemen, your moſt obedient humble Servant, GABRIEL LEEKEY.

THE Members of this Aſſociation are moſt earneſtly requeſted to meet at Antwerp Tavern, Threadneedle-ſtreet, on Friday next, the 13th inſtant, ſeven o'clock in the evening.

GABRIEL LEEKEY, Chairman.

The Chair will be taken at eight o'clock.

That the worthy Livery of London, who are not Members of the Aſſociation, may know the principles on which it was inſtituted, they are now republiſhed, and it is preſumed that they will meet the approbation and hearty concurrence of all who are friends to peace and good order.

At a period when party ſpirit and popular tumults diſturbed the peace of this city, a number of independent and reſpectable Liverymen, under the name of the Aſſociated Livery of London, united with a view to reſtore tranquillity, and ſupport the dignity of this metropolis; their efforts proved ſuccefsful in checking thoſe diſorders, and brought back peace and order to the city. As ſimilar cauſes may produce ſimilar effects, and intereſted men are ever ready to blow the firſt ſparks of popular diſcord into a flame; as a ſpirit of innovation on different occaſions has manifeſted itſelf, and endangered our happy Conſtitution, the Aſſociated Livery have therefore thought it expedient, and believe it is for the public ſecurity and intereſt, that a body of men impreſſed with theſe ſentiments, influenced by theſe motives, and purſuing theſe deſigns, ſhould always be in readineſs to oppoſe any attempts of a ſimilar nature. With this intention only they mean to continue their meetings; for theſe purpoſes only they intend to exert themſelves, and hope to have the aſſiſtance and ſupport of their brethren, the worthy Liverymen of London. They therefore reſolve as good citizens and good ſubjects, to maintain the due reſpect to the laws, and the legal authority of thoſe who are intruſted with the adminiſtration of them, to oppoſe any innovation which may endanger our happy Conſtitution; and to the uttermoſt of their power and abilities to promote peace, good order, and good government of this city and the nation in general.

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE WHIG CLUB OF ENGLAND.

Crown and Anchor, Tavern, Nov 11.

IN conſequence of a requiſitionm ade by a number of Members, an extraordinary Meeting of this club was yeſterday held.

His Grace the DUKE of BEDFORD in the Chair.

The Noble Duke in a ſhort Addreſs, ſtated the purpoſe for which it had been thought neceſſary to aſſemble. The daring and flagitious outrage on the perſon of his Majeſty, on the firſt day of the Seſſion, had made a deep impreſſion on the heart of every Engliſhman; but they were all convinced that the laws were adequate to the puniſhment of the atro-

cious

cious crime, and with becoming vigilance in the execution were adequate to the perfect security of his Majesty's Person and Government. They would all combine their best efforts to discover and bring to condign punishment the miscreant offenders, and would upon this and every occasion do their utmost to second and support the laws for the maintenance of the King's dignity and the preservation of the public peace. On this subject, he was sure there was not in the room either a divided or a lukewarm heart. They all knew that Ministers had made use of this outrage as a pretext for introducing into Parliament two of the most alarming measures for cramping British Liberty that ever were known in this country since the Constitution was settled. They were a direct attack on the Freedom of the Press and of Speech—on all the rights of popular discussion, and even on the sacred right of petition. In such a crisis then, so long as the valuable liberty of meeting together was left, they would no doubt feel it their duty to come forward and exert their privliege to stop its progress, by expressing their opinion in as firm and decided a tone as the occasion required, and to oppose it in every legal way that they could. Some resolutions were then handed to the Chair and were read.

Mr. Fox rose to second them. In that Club, he said, he was so well known, that he needed not to say, it was the system of his conduct rather to avoid popular meetings upon common occasions, than to covet them; and he knew that many of his friends had imputed to him, that even in that club he had been too cautious in wishing them to abstain from the agitation of questions concerning public affairs. It was not now necessary to enter into the reasons which justified in his mind their not being forward upon every occasion to express their sense of measures, and why even they had abstained in instances which apparently called for their activity. But all those reasons must now give way to more forcible reasons; what might be good and proper up to this moment would now be the reverse: if the Bills should pass into law, it was a doubt whether that Club ever could meet again: he had not been able, from the statement of Ministers, to make up his mind positively; but from their description of their intended Bill, it was a matter very doubtful whether that Club ever could meet again in freedom. If the Bills passed into law, popular meetings were in fact impracticable for any solid purpose of utility, since all free discusion was to be utterly annihilated. The Bill which the House of Commons had determined to admit, was not yet before them; but its object had been distinctly opened by Ministers, and he declared that if he had to chuse between the two Bills, he should prefer the Bill in the House of Lords to that which was coming into the House of Commons, as the least exceptionable of the two. What was our situation in the present crisis? The alternative was either to resort to popular meetings, and procure the strong united sense of the people on the present emergency, or to admit at once that we cannot petition, and submit to see ourselves deprived for ever of this sacred right. What must be the consequences to Government and to the country if this right of political discussion should be taken away? If men would cease to think—if popular opinion could be conquered, when its voice was stifled, there might be an argument with despotism for the measure; but nothing was so certain that men would find vent for their indignation, and popular feeling when most open was the least dangerous. Even to a well regulated government, then, the right of popular discussion was of high

high value, but to all those who loved freedom and tranquillity, the right was inestimable, as by holding out an incessant corrective of power, abuse was checked before popular indignation burst into tumult. He could not contemplate the disorders to which this measure might give rise without horror and dismay. If men might not meet legally, they might be tempted to meet illegally. Grievances might be too great for human patience to endure without complaint. Would you drive the people of England to that extremity when they could not endure without murmur, nor murmur without felony? He approved, therefore, of the resolutions which had been read by the noble Chairman. He thought that there ought to be meetings every where; there ought to be addresses to the several branches of the Legislature, deprecating the passing of laws which struck at the fundamental principles of English liberty, and by thus agitating the great question for the time, they would take the most effectual way to preserve the public peace for ever.

On reading the third resolution, THE DUKE of NORFOLK suggested, that as the Bill intimated to the Commons last night was not yet before Parliament, it would be better to confine themselves entirely to the Bill in the House of Lords. He said this, because whatever this Club did ought to be maturely weighed, that it might not be confounded with those societies, whose rash proceedings, violence, and uproar, had excited in the minds of a considerable part of the people of this country, an indisposition to every measure of opposition to Government.

MR. ERSKINE perfectly agreed with the Noble Duke, that as the Bill was not yet brought into the House of Commons, though the majority, amounting to two hundred and fourteen members, had resolved that it should be brought into the House, it was better to specify only the alarming Bill in the House of Lords; but he trusted that he would not, in that Club, follow the profligate example of those persons who had made their own slanders a pretext for the iniquitous acts they were about to commit. He had heard that the proceedings of other societies had been not merely seditious, but treasonable. He denied the fact. He had officially seen their papers. Persons had been accused, indeed, and fortunately for them the accusation was brought into a course of judicial enquiry. The result was, that they were fully and perfectly acquitted. They had not attacked the constitution. They had inveighed against unnecessary wars—were they the constitution? Against the corruption of office, against an army of placemen and pensioners—were they the constitution? He hoped they would not join in calumnies against any set of men without proof. Let them see proof of their sedition, and then it would be fit to join in the cry against them.

THE DUKE of NORFOLK said he had not said a syllable against them. He observed only that a prejudice had gone forth against them, whether true or false, it was certainly not for them to enquire--but they ought to avoid any rashness which might occasion prejudice in the public mind against their efforts.

MR. FOX said, the objection of the Noble Duke merited their consideration, yet they were not left in the dark about the meaning of the Bill to be introduced. It had two objects—to suppress all public meetings and all private meetings. To hold a public meeting, intimation was to be sent to a magistrate, who was to attend, if he thought proper, with a number of

 civil

civil officers, or, if he pleaſed, with a military band; and if any words were ſpoken by any perſon, that the magiſtrate might chuſe to think improper, he was to take the perſon uttering them into cuſtody; and if he reſiſted, or if any perſons reſiſted, it was to be felony without benefit of clergy. If he choſe to diſmiſs and ſeparate the whole meeting, this alſo he could do; and it was to be felony in the whole not to ſeparate on his command. So much with regard to public meeting. In regard to its operation on private meetings, Mr. Pitt had not been equally explicit; but ſo far as he had explained his intentions, they were to be ſuppreſſed wherever money was to be taken for admiſſion; and, as this might obviouſly be evaded by means of granting tickets, all meetings of any kind, in a houſe or room, to an extent beyond the ſize of a family, were to be prohibited. Thus all ſociety was to be cut up by the roots; all the intercourſes of life; all clubs; all friendly meetings where men diſcourſed together on the ſtate of human affairs, and on the condition of their country, were liable to be annihilated. To ſuch extent did the Bill go, if he could draw any concluſion from the manner in which Miniſters deſcribed their own meaſure. Surely it was enough to ſtate theſe things to rouſe every Engliſhman to oppoſe it; but undoubtedly it would be time enough when the Bill was fairly before them. He therefore ſuggeſted words that would make the reſolutions meet the ideas of the Noble Duke, and they were adopted unanimouſly, in the terms in which our readers will find them in the advertiſement below.

The meeting was uncommonly ſtrong, conſidering the ſhortneſs of the notice. All the members of both Houſes of Parliament belonging to it were preſent, to the number of near fifty lords and members of the Houſe of Commons.

Crown and Anchor Tavern, Nov. 11.

WHIG CLUB.

AT an extraordinary meeting of the Whig Club, held this day,

His Grace the DUKE of BEDFORD in the Chair,

The following Reſolutions were unanimouſly agreed to:

Reſolved,

1. That this Club has ſeen, with the utmoſt horror and indignation, the daring attack made on the perſon of his Majeſty, in his paſſage to Parliament.

Reſolved,

2. That we will give every aid to the civil magiſtrate in detecting and bringing to puniſhment the perſons concerned in the ſaid attack, convinced that the laws now in exiſtence will be found fully ſufficient for that purpoſe.

Reſolved,

3. That lamenting as we do this nefarious act, we have ſeen with the utmoſt concern that it has been uſed as a pretext for introducing into Parliament a Bill ſtriking at the Liberty of the Preſs and the Freedom of Public Diſcuſſion; in ſubſtance and effect, deſtroying the right of the ſubject to petition the different branches of the legiſlature for Redreſs of Grievances, and utterly ſubverſive of the genuine principles of the Britiſh Conſtitution, and for propoſing another meaſure calculated to produce ſimilar effects by means ſtill more exceptionable.

Reſolved,

Resolved,

4. That it is highly expedient that meetings of the people in their respective districts be immediately called to consider this important subject; and for the purpose of petitioning Parliament against the said Bill, or any other measures which may tend to infringe the just rights of the people of Great Britain.

Resolved,

5. That these Resolutions be printed in the Newspapers.

BEDFORD.

Resolved,

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Duke of Bedford for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

ED. HALL, Secretary.

Crown and Anchor, Strand, Nov. 11, 1795.

AT a meeting held at the Crown and Anchor in the Strand,

JOHN GREGORY, Esq. in the Chair.

It was resolved to call a general meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster, to be held at Westminster-hall on Monday next the 16th instant, at twelve o'clock precisely, to consider the propriety of petitioning the legislature against the measures now depending in Parliament affecting the liberties of the people of England.

J. GREGORY.

November 11, 1795.

TOWN-HALL, BOROUGH, SOUTHWARK.

AT a numerous and respectable meeting of the electors and other inhabitants of the said borough and parts adjacent, convened by public advertisement held here this day,

RICHARD CARPENTER SMITH, Esq. in the Chair.

Resolved,

That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, congratulating his Majesty upon his late escape from the insult offered by a few misguided people on his way to Parliament, and expressing our steady and unfeigned attachment to his Majesty's person, government, and the constitution; and also praying that his Majesty will order the proper steps to be taken for opening an immediate negociation for peace.

Resolved,

That Lord William Russell be requested to present the same to his Majesty.

Resolved,

That the thanks of this meeting be given to Richard Carpenter Smith, Esq. for his equal and impartial conduct in the Chair.

Committee Room, Beaufort Buildings, Strand, Nov. 10, 1795.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

THE friends of Parliamentary Reform are requested to attend a general meeting of this Society, on Thursday the twelfth instant, at eleven o'clock precisely, at Copenhagen-house, and there to take into consideration the most

moſt unparalleled and tremendous Bills pending at this time in the two Houſes of Parliament, and to teſtify their ſentiments thereon, in a legal and conſtitutional manner, according to the tenor and meaning of the yet unrepealed Bill of Rights, by petition to the three branches of the legiſlature.

JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary.
ALEX. GALLOWAY, Aſſiſt. Sec.

CITIZENS!

The meeting is ſtrictly legal, under the authority of the Bill of Rights; a Proclamation is not law; it cannot do thoſe rights away; attempts may be made to ſeize ſome of the perſons aſſembled; do not reſiſt. Miniſtry deſire nothing more earneſtly than tumult. For this purpoſe reports have been induſtriouſly circulated that ſome of the members of this Society mean to attend the meeting armed; but we doubt not this is a ſnare which the members will carefully avoid. Citizens! be upon your guard! If any one ſhould be taken into cuſtody, the act is illegal; ſuffer it patiently; truſt to a virtuous jury, and we triumph: nothing can injure the cauſe of civil liberty ſo much as violence.

THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF LIBERTY.

THE members of this Society are requeſted to meet with their brethren the London Correſponding Society, on Thurſday next, and to bring with them as many friends to the rights and liberties of their country (now about to be invaded by a profligate adminiſtration) as the importance of the occaſion may require.

JOSEPH BURKS, Secretary.

No. 74, Sun Street, Biſhopſgate Street.

TO JOURNEYMEN BAKERS.

AT a numerous meeting of that body on Tueſday the 10th inſtant, it was reſolved to call a general meeting of the trade on Thurſday the 12th, at their reſpective Houſes of Call, to conſider the alarming effects of the preſent Convention Bill now pending in Parliament.

The general meeting to be held at the Percy Arms, Church Court, Strand; Black Horſe, Maze Pond, Southwark; Jolly Sailor, Ratcliffe Highway; and Paul's Head, Fenchurch Street.

MEETING OF THE PEOPLE,

In a Field near COPENHAGEN-HOUSE,

Thurſday November 12.

THE Day-Star of Liberty has once more ſhone reſplendent on the efforts of the people, in repelling the advances of arbitrary encroachments on their rights; and this day, in defiance of a Proclamation, which every rational mind knows is not law, upwards of three hundred thouſand people, moſt of them highly reſpectable even from their ſituation in life, and all of them more ſo from the decency, gravity, and decorum of their demeanour and behaviour, aſſembled (according to advertiſements given at a very ſhort notice)

notice) in a large field near Copenhagen-houfe. The philofophical and reflecting mind had never, perhaps, a finer opportunity of contemplating the mental energies of fo vaft a number of fellow creatures, as on this memorable day, when thoufands of free-born Britons poured from every quarter of this overgrown metropolis, to exprefs their abhorrence, in a conftitutional manner, at one of the moft barefaced arbitrary meafures that ever defiled the page of hiftory, of a country which had the fmalleft pretenfion to call itfelf free.

The meeting was appointed by the advertifement, to take place at eleven o'clock in the morning—but the immenfe crowds that appeared to be approaching from all quarters loudly demanded that, in juftice to the importance and folemnity of the occafion, the opening of the proceedings fhould be for fome time deferred. At half paft twelve oclock, Citizens Hodgfon, Thelwall, and Afhley, from three of the roftra, erected at convenient diftances, for the better accommodation of every one prefent, explained to the company the mode of proceeding which the Society had determined to adopt—which was, to read the feveral refolutions and petitions which were intended to be offered to the confideration of the meeting, at the refpective roftra; and to take the votes for and againft them in the following manner, viz, That each perfon giving his vote for the affirmative, fhould hold up his hand, on a white handkerchief being elevated from the roftra, as foon as the queftion was put; and that immediately after this being determined, thofe who were of a contrary opinion fhould in the fame manner fignify the fame, by holding up their hands, on a hat being elevated from the roftra, immediately after putting the queftion. To avoid repetition on this head, it is with the higheft fatisfaction we relate the fact, that in the courfe of the whole day's proceedings, not one fingle diffentient hand was held up. Thefe preparatory meafures having been taken, about one o'clock Citizen Afhley, in the name of the Committee of the London Correfponding Society, propofed Citizen Duane to fill the Chair, which being unanimoufly agreed to,

Citizen DUANE took the Chair accordingly.

He addreffed the affembly in a brief, but energetic manner; he faid, the meeting of the day proved that a proclamation was not a law; he faid, that their laft meeting had offended the vicious Adminiftration, which now deftroyed the country more then the difgraces and difafters which had attended the military operations on the Continent: he was proud however, to fay, that they had charters for their meeting, which, until now, had never been attempted to be even doubted. The fifth article of the Bill of Rights entitled them to petition; and Magna Charta had, by the feventh article, long—long before, juftified refiftance to any encroachment upon the liberties of the nation. He then afferted the right of public meetings and private deliberations; the neceffity of private and public opinion, and free difcuffion on all topics which could intereft or affect men. He recommended meafures of peace and firmnefs—but he faid, that it would remain with the people of this country to determine, how long they would bear innovation on their liberties, an unnatural war, and the invafion of their domeftic rights, by every fpecies of arbitrary ufurpation and the deteftable meafures which were now attempted to be introduced, in violation of all thofe dear and facred privileges which the efforts and blood of their anceftors, in a feries of ages, had fecured to them.

He then adverted to the meaſures which now created ſuch univerſal alarm, apprehenſion, and diſtraction; he oppoſed it againſt the honeſt fears and educated habits of Engliſhmen; he diſplayed the preſent and the future circumſtances of Britons, ſhould the meaſures now in agitation be carried into effect.

He very warmly painted the conduct and temper of Engliſhmen in former periods, and contraſted their preſent condition with thoſe " happy times." He again reverted to the conduct of Britons on all occaſions—how jealous of their liberties, how generous in their indulgence to men whom they could not ſuſpect.

In the preſent times, he ſaid, ſuſpicion was a cardinal virtue, and prudence a rule of conduct which no honeſt man could be ſafe in departing from. It becomes men to be ſteady, like their anceſtors, and to adopt meaſures of prudence from the great examples which were before them.

He then generally alluded to the conduct, meaſures, and opinion of Adminiſtration, and appeared to feel, that he was embarraſſed with a ſenſibility which we cannot expreſs a ſenſe of in adequate terms.

He then proceeded to open the matter before him, and read the Reſolutions and Addreſſes which are annexed.

We offer the following as ſketches (taken in ſhort-hand) of the different Addreſſes; but will not vouch for their preciſe accuracy, though we can aſſert that their ſpirit and ſubſtance is preſerved.

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Address, Remonstrance, and Petition of many Thouſands of the Inhabitants of London and its Environs, aſſociated with the London Correſponding Society---the legal but determined Advocates of Britiſh Conſtitutional Liberty, as eſtabliſhed by the principles of the Revolution in 1688.

Sire,

IT is with no ſmall degree of diffidence and anxiety, that we approach you once more, to preſent to your Majeſty the griefs and complaints of an over-burthened people, whom the miſconduct and arbitrary counſels of your Majeſty's Miniſters are rapidly driving to the verge of deſperation. Twice before, within the laſt five months, have we attempted in vain, to pour our grievances into your royal ear, and to convince your Majeſty, that the meaſures recently purſued by Adminiſtration, as they have a direct tendency to reduce your people to the laſt degree of human miſery, and, conſequently to excite diſcontents againſt your Majeſty's Government, are, in reality, hoſtile to your Majeſty's authority, and inimical to your real intereſts. But, alas! our complaints, however well founded---our petitions, however conſtitutional, have been paſſed over in ſilent neglect, and we have reaſon to believe, have been prevented even from coming to your Majeſty's knowledge, by the artifices of perſons in high authority who ſurround you, and who have an intereſt in preventing your Majeſty from being made acquainted with the real condition and ſentiments of the nation.

Inſtead of redreſs, therefore, we have met with calumny;—inſtead of *alleviation* of exiſting oppreſſions, we are threatened with the total *extinction* of our yet remaining liberties. Parliamentary corruption, and an unjuſt

and

and ruinous war, have reduced us to beggary and famine; and when we call for the reformation of the *one*, and the relinquiſhment of the *other*, Bills are brought into Parliament by your Majeſty's Miniſters, which make it Felony and High Treaſon to give a tongue to thoſe miſeries we cannot but feel!

But while it is yet legal—while Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights ſtill remain in force!!!—BEFORE theſe tremendous Bills, which threaten to overthrow the conſtitutional Throne of the Houſe of Brunſwick, and to eſtabliſh the deſpotiſm of the exiled Stuarts, paſs into a law—we aſſemble once more, called together by the ſtrong ſentiment of duty to ourſelves, to our poſterity, and to your Majeſty, whoſe ſafety is involved in theſe unparalleled meaſures, to expreſs, in a manner at once firm and conſtitutional, the ſenſe we entertain of them, and our well-founded apprehenſions of the dreadful conſequences with which they muſt be attended.

At the ſame time permit us to conjure your Majeſty, in the moſt ſolemn manner, to diſtruſt the ſincerity of thoſe, who, with inſidious profeſſions of zeal and attachment to your perſonal ſafety and aggrandiſement, would perſuade you to aim at the the extention of your authority beyond the due limits preſcribed by the Revolution; to call to your recollection the leſſons and examples of former hiſtory; to reflect upon the inſtructive ſeries of events that placed your family upon the throne of Britain; and finally to diſcriminate, with that rigid impartiality which can alone give ſtability to your Majeſty's government, between your real and your pretended friends.

We conjure your Majeſty, with that correctneſs and freedom which the awful criſis of our fate inſpires, not to forget that wholeſome and incontrovertible maxim—

"That thoſe who are hoſtile to the rights and liberties of the people, "can never be real friends to the juſt Prerogatives of the Crown."

The intereſt of the people and their chief magiſtrate ought to be inſeparable; but we conjure your Majeſty ſeriouſly to reflect, how far this can poſſibly be the caſe, when reſtrictions are put upon the liberties of the ſubject "during the term of your Majeſty's natural life," which have never before been deemed neceſſary ſince the eſtabliſhment of our conſtitution. Neither can we, conſiſtently with that conſtitutional loyalty we profeſs, take leave of this ſubject, without reminding your Majeſty of the ominous circumſtance of the preſent meaſures being founded upon precedents (ſo far as precedents can any where be found) in the deſpotic reigns of the Houſe of Tudor and of Stuart, the latter of which precedents was ſo ſhortly followed by the revolution that drove that Houſe of Stuart from the Throne, and was indeed ſo materially inſtrumental in producing that event. We truſt, whatever may be the evil counſels and evil projects of a deſperate adminiſtration, that the Houſe of Brunſwick will not forget the principles, to which they owe their elevation; and we therefore ſubjoin, without fear of offence, or dread of imputation on our loyalty, the fond belief, that Britons have not yet relinquiſhed either the love of liberty, or the manly courage which diſtinguiſhed their anceſtors at the period to which we have alluded.

And, finally, we conclude by petitioning your Majeſty, to lay theſe things to your heart; to prevent the poſſibility, by preventing the neceſſity of inteſtine commotion; and to inſtruct your Majeſty's Miniſters (or ſuch others as your Majeſty in your wiſdom may think proper to call to your counſels) to turn their attention to the redreſs of exiſting abuſes, inſtead of laying additional

additional burthens and reſtrictions upon your already oppreſſed and unhappy people.

Signed, W. DUANE, Chairman.
J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament aſſembled.

The PETITION of ſeveral thouſand Britons, Inhabitants of London, and its Environs, the firm and conſtitutional Aſſertors of Britiſh Liberty.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIPS,

The people having no immediate connection with that particular branch of the legiſlature which is compoſed of your Lordſhips, further than as it forms a component part of the conſtitution, it but rarely happens that you are addreſſed by them; or that they call for your aſſiſtance, to vindicate their rights, or repel the threatened encroachments of miniſterial ambition. But in the preſent alarming criſis, when almoſt all that remains of the conſtitution eſtabliſhed at the revolution of 1688, is openly attacked by a Bill introduced into Parliament by one of his Majeſty's Miniſters, a member of your Honourable Houſe; and another, equally alarming, which has been brought into the Houſe of Commons, under the reſponſibility of his Majeſty's Chancellor of the Exchequer, we ſhould deem ourſelves inexcuſable if we neglected the opportunity of a ſolemn appeal to each of the reſpective branches of the legiſlature, to teſtify our deep ſenſe of the threatened invaſion of our liberties, and to remind our legiſlators of the ſacred tyes of reciprocal obligation that muſt ever exiſt between the Government and the people; that, whatever may be the conſequence of the preſent meaſures, our names may deſcend unſullied to poſterity, and the univerſe bear witneſs that we have diſcharged the duty of men, who were anxious to preſerve the peace and liberty of their country.

We preſent, therefore, for the firſt time, at the bar of your Lordſhips, and pray you to take into your moſt ſerious conſideration, the alarming tendency and probable conſequences of the coercive ſyſtem, now in the contemplation of the legiſlature, and of appealing to the authority of ſuch times as thoſe from which the framers of the impending Bills have thought fit to draw their precedents. Is it to the arbitrary reigns of the Tudors that a people, boaſting the freedom of a renovated conſtitution, are to look up for the authorities that are to reſtrict their rights, and new model their laws and inſtitutions? Is it from the uſurpations of the Houſe of Stuart that precedents are to be drawn by the Miniſters of that throne which was erected upon the ruins of the family that attempted, and for a while accompliſhed thoſe uſurpations? If the times of the Stuarts were "good times," what were thoſe anceſtors who produced the Revolution of 1688, in order to change thoſe times? If the conduct of the Houſe of Stuart deſerves the imitation of this enlightened age, what is the Houſe of Brunſwick, whoſe ſucceſſion was ſecured by driving thoſe Stuarts into vagrant exile?

We beſeech your Lordſhips ſeriouſly to conſider, whether, by countenancing ſuch arguments, and adopting meaſures upon ſuch precedents, you may not ultimately produce a ſuſpicion even in the royal breaſt, that your

attachment to the Houſe of Brunſwick is not ſo ſincere as for the peace of the nation might be wiſhed? For how can they be ſincerely attached to the Houſe of Brunſwick, who abjure the principles which ſeated that Houſe upon the throne?

We conjure your Lordſhips, alſo, to conſider, whether to ſuffer a Bill for the fabrication of new ſpecies and genera of treaſon—a Bill which does, in reality, repeal and annul theſe wiſe and excellent proviſions extorted from Edward the Third, by the wiſdom and perſevering virtue of the independent repreſentatives of the people, to originate in your honourable Houſe, is not, at this period, peculiarly impolitic, and calculated, if ſuch prejudices as ſome of your Lordſhips ſeem to apprehend, have in reality ariſen againſt the ariſtocratic branch of our conſtitution, to give thoſe prejudices additional force, and even to create ſuch prejudices, if yet, as we preſume, unknown?

To conclude, my Lords, permit your Petitioners to intreat your honorable Houſe, to preſerve the country from the manifold dangers, factions, conſpiracies, and diſturbances to which, in all human probability, thoſe unconſtitutional meaſures, if unhappily adopted, may give birth.

Signed, W. DUANE, Chairman.
J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

The PETITION of nearly Four Hundred Thouſand Britons, Inhabitants of London and its Environs, aſſembled together in the open air, to expreſs their free ſentiments, according to the tenure of the Bill of Rights, on the ſubject of the threatened Invaſion of their Conſtitutional Liberties.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURABLE HOUSE,

YOUR Petitioners approach you, once more, to make their grievances and apprehenſions known, in a legal and conſtitutional manner, to that branch of the legiſlature, which, from its legal ſtyle and form, was evidently intended to be the conſtitutional guardian of the people's liberties, and the champion of its rights and privileges! But we approach you, not as heretofore, to claim the reformation of exiſting abuſes, for if thoſe claims had been attended to, the cauſe of our preſent Petition could never have exiſted. We come not to repeat our unanſwered arguments on the neceſſity of Parliamentary Reform. The very introduction, by his Majeſty's Miniſters, of the meaſures we now proteſt againſt, is a demonſtrative evidence of the neceſſity of ſuch Reform; but we approach you with conſtitutional reverence, and Britiſh firmneſs, to conjure you not to drive the people of this diſtreſſed and irritated nation to ſuch deſpair, as the adoption of the coercive ſyſtem in agitation before you, we are firmly perſuaded, in the end, muſt inevitably produce.

We conjure this honourable Houſe, the members of which ſtill continue to ſtyle themſelves the Repreſentatives of the People, to remember that

that the vital energies of the British Constitution consist in the liberties of speech and of the press; that the safety and preservation of our lives and liberties (next after that immortal institution the Trial by Jury) depend upon the strict observance of the provisions of that admirable Statute of Treasons, extorted by a virtuous House of Commons from Edward the Third. We conjure you also to remember, that the invasion of these liberties, and the violation of this safety, by arbitrary institutions, and new theories of constructive treasons, though sometimes assumed under pretence of ancient prerogatives, and sometimes confirmed by corrupt representatives, and arbitrary Acts of Parliament, have never failed of being productive of consequences the most alarming, both to the government and the people. That the adoption of those very maxims now quoted with exultation by his Majesty's Ministers, brought one unhappy Prince of the House of Stuart to the scaffold, and drove another with his posterity from the throne; and that, therefore, to propose and support such measures is, in reality, to endanger not only the tranquillity of the nation, but the safety even of his Majesty's person and government, in support of which these measures are said to be brought forward.

Permit us solemnly to conjure this honourable House to recollect the events that immediately preceded and produced the revolution of 1688; the doctrines advanced in justification of that memorable event, and the principles which established the House of Brunswick on the throne. Let us conjure you also to consider with due deliberation, the limits, and the sacred nature of that compact which exists between the government and the people; and the dreadful consequences that must inevitably ensue, if ever these limits should be violated, or this compact broken!

If these circumstances are duly considered, we feel a settled confidence that the strong, and hitherto unparalleled attempts to destroy the personal security of the people of these realms, and annihilate the sacred rights of political discussion, which his Majesty's Ministers have had the boldness to avow, will meet with the decided disapprobation of this Honourable House—that precedents drawn from the tyrannical reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts, will be rejected with indignation; and that this honourable House will be struck with horror at the idea of staining the memory of the House of Brunswick, by the revival of those very measures which brought the House of Stuart into such general odium, and was productive of such intolerable oppression as to justify the resistance of the people, and produce that glorious Revolution, upon the principles of which, and of which alone the House of Brunswick is at this time entitled to the British crown.

Your Petitioners therefore pray this honourable House to reconsider the purport and tendency of the Bill introduced upon the responsibility of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for the restriction, or rather the utter prevention, of Popular Assemblies for the purpose of political investigation, and to dismiss it with that marked disapprobation it so justly deserves;—to guard, with the most inviolable respect, that sacred institution the Trial by Jury;—and to suffer no arbitrary innovations, under any pretence whatever, on the existing laws of treason and sedition—laws which have hitherto been found fully competent to all the just purposes of free and equitable government.

And, finally, we entreat this hononourable House to believe, that when we profess our abhorrence of all tumult and violence, and reject with

with the utmoſt indignation the groundleſs calumnies that have been ſpread againſt our peaceful, orderly, and conſtitutional meetings; we do it from a firm and long ſettled conviction, that all acts of violence and outrage are moſt eminently injurious to that great cauſe of national and conſtitutional liberty to which we are attached. At the ſame time we conjure you to aſſure his Majeſty's Miniſters, that the people of Britain have not degenerated from the ſpirit and bravery of their anceſtors, nor forgot the important leſſons inculcated by their examples.

Reſolved, that the thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, Lord Lauderdale, the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, Richard Brinſley Sheridan, Charles Grey, John Chriſtian Curwen, Charles Sturt, and all thoſe diſtinguiſhed members of the two Houſes of Parliament, who, in the preſent hour of trial, have proved themſelves to be the true friends of the rights and liberties of the people.

Reſolved, that the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Whig Club, for their ſpirited proceedings and reſolutions of yeſterday; and to all thoſe perſons whoſe patriotic exertions have conduced to the accompliſhment of the preſent happy unanimity among the friends of freedom.

Reſolved, that the London Correſponding Society, and the other friends of Liberty and Juſtice here aſſembled, entertain the moſt ſettled and decided abhorrence of all tumult and violence; that they reſpect the peace and happineſs of ſociety, and regard, therefore, with becoming reverence, the inviolability of all Magiſtrates, and others engaged in the conſtitutional diſcharge of their reſpective functions.

Reſolved, that we deplore, in common with all true lovers of the genuine principles of liberty and order, the tumultuary exceſſes of an enraged and uninformed populace, on the firſt day of the preſent ſeſſion of Parliament; and mark with our moſt unequivocal cenſure that unhappy deluſion which appears to have occaſioned miſguided individuals to direct their indignation againſt the Sovereign, for errors and miſconduct for which his Miniſters alone ought to be rendered reſponſible; and that, not in a tumultuary, but in a legal and conſtitutional way:—a deluſion which would never have exiſted, if the efforts of popular ſocieties to illuminate the people had not been counteracted by unprincipled inquiſitions and illegal perſecutions.

Reſolved, that the aſſertions of certain perſons in high ſtation and authority, that the inſults offered to the perſon of the Chief Magiſtrate, in his paſſage to and from Parliament on that day, originated in the meeting held on the preceding Monday in the neighbourhood of Copenhagen-houſe, is a groſs, unfounded, wilful, and treacherous calumny, invented by intereſted and deſigning perſons (who perhaps know that theſe exceſſes originated from a very different quarter), to furniſh them with a pretence for tyrannical uſurpation, long before digeſted and determined upon.

Reſolved, that we know how to cheriſh and to practice, in caſes of the laſt extremity, the conſtitutional right of reſiſtance to oppreſſion. We will exert our utmoſt endeavours on all occaſions to repreſs all irregularity and exceſſes, and to bring the authors of ſuch unjuſtifiable proceedings to the juſt reſponſibility of the law.

(Signed) W. DUANE, Chairman.
J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

The

The ſeveral Reſolutions and Petitions having been read, and unanimouſly agreed to,

Citizen JONES addreſſed the Meeting in a moſt impreſſive manner. To attempt a detail of his admirable ſpeech is more than the limits of our paper will allow, and we muſt, therefore, content ourſelves with giving a mere ſketch or outline of it. He began by a ſolemn appeal to the Meeting on the momentous occaſion which had called them together, and forcibly depicted the importance of it, by calling to their recollection that they were then met to petition the Legiſlature againſt the paſſing of an Act which, if once become a law, would totally annihilate every grand and eſſential privilege which, as Engliſhmen, they had hitherto prided themſelves in poſſeſſing. He took particular notice of the many ſhameful and unfounded calumnies which had been induſtriouſly circulated againſt the London Correſponding Society, and eſpecially pointed out the great injuſtice which had been done to that body of men by coupling with their laſt meeting, and attaching to it the outrage which had been committed on his Majeſty, on the firſt day of the Seſſion, by a ſuffering, diſtreſſed, and deluded populace. He called every one to witneſs, and dared any one to deny it if he could, that the Correſponding Society had, from its commencement to the preſent hour, uniformly exerted its efforts in ſupport of the people's rights, in a manner which held forth a pattern to every one, for peace, order, and decorum. It was by a ſtrict adherence to theſe modes alone, he ſaid, that the friends to freedom and reform could ever hope to carry the great and important queſtion for which they contended. He took a review of all the attacks which had been made upon the conſtitution by the preſent Adminiſtration, and remarked, that, from one progreſſive ſtage to another, they had at laſt arrived to the preſent *acme* of deſpotic attempt, which could not fail to crown their efforts; for, if it took place, the liberties of Engliſhmen were no more.

He conjured the Meeting to reflect, that every thing dear to man was now at ſtake; they were either to ſubmit, without a murmur, to every degree of taxation and degradation which could be put upon them, or, by their determined oppoſition to the preſent unheard-of and unprecedented meaſures, they were to oppoſe and reſiſt them. It was a hard caſe, he thought, that a great and generous people, like that of England, ſhould be plunged into a ruinous and deſolating war, which has brought them to an abyſs of miſery and diſtreſs ſcarcely in the power of words to deſcribe; and that in the very moment when this diſtreſs began moſt feelingly to operate, and that it might naturally be ſuppoſed the people would, of courſe, murmur and remonſtrate at the wrongs and injuries they ſuffered, unheard-of meaſures were adopted by Miniſters, and brought forward for the ſanction of the Legiſlature, to prevent ſuffering miſery from voiding a ſigh or a groan, without incurring the high and mighty penalty of tranſportation. He expreſſed the utmoſt aſtoniſhment, that any ſet of men ſhould ſo far have dared to infringe upon the conſtitution, as ſettled at the Revolution of 1688, by which the preſent family were eventually ſeated on the Throne; and declared, that he hoped to ſee the day, when the Miniſters, who had adviſed ſuch arbitrary meaſures, againſt the long eſtabliſhed rights and privileges of the people, would anſwer for it with their heads. In a word, he touched upon every point in which their proceedings were at the ſame time deſpotic, and without the ſhadow of truth as a foundation to

 ground

ground them on; and concluded a moſt animated and energetic Addreſs, by requeſting, that the people would never dream of reſt till, by their united and perſevering efforts, they had got rid of a monſter, which at once awakened the feelings of indignation and horror only to reflect on for a moment.

Several other citizens ſpoke with conſiderable force and energy; and their Addreſſes were received by the Meeting with the warmeſt and moſt unbounded applauſe. Citizen Thelwall was ſingularly happy in his alluſions to and comments upon the good times from which the precedents were drawn on which the preſent Bills depending are founded, and ſhewed clearly that the reigns of the Tudors and the Stuarts are in perfect uniſon with the temper and diſpoſition of the immaculate heaven-born Miniſter of the preſent day.

The laſt ſpeaker was very flatteringly attended to, and concluded a ſpeech, which was received with abundant applauſe, by an earneſt exhortation to the Meeting, to keep in view the grand object on which they met, and remember that a peaceable departure from the place in which they then were, would be the greateſt honour they could do themſelves, and the moſt conſummate triumph they could obtain over their numerous malignant enemies. This advice was certainly very ſtrictly adhered to, for this aſtoniſhingly numerous aſſembly ſeparated in the moſt cheerful manner, and evinced, beyond a poſſibility of doubt, that thouſands of men may and can meet in ſo glorious and exalted a cauſe as that of their deareſt rights and privileges, however their indignation may be rouſed againſt thoſe who attack them, and ſtill preſerve their temper when patience is neceſſary. Like all former Meetings of this Society, and of the friends of freedom, each perſon returned to his reſpective home, in a manner which ſhewed that the preſence of magiſtrates was altogether needleſs, and that the beſt ſecurity for keeping the peace, even where thouſands are met, is the perfect knowledge of the rights and duties of citizens.

Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand, Nov. 10, 1795.

ASSOCIATION FOR PRESERVING LIBERTY AND PROPERTY AGAINST REPUBLICANS AND LEVELLERS.

AT a ſpecial meeting of the Committee of this Society,

JOHN REEVES, Eſq. in the Chair.

THIS Committee, ever mindful of the original cauſe and motive of their aſſociation—the neceſſity of the times, and the deſire of counteracting the republican innovators upon our conſtitution—but unwilling, without ſtrong and apparent reaſons, to obtrude themſelves upon the public attention, have, for a long time paſt, remained inactive though anxious ſpectators of the courſe of public events. But feeling now, in common with the reſt of his Majeſty's loyal ſubjects, the deepeſt concern and indignation at the late nefarious and ſavage attempt againſt his Royal Perſon and authority:—perſuaded alſo, that the ſame combination of wicked and diſaffected perſons, againſt whoſe dangerous and ſubtle machinations this Aſſociation ſo ſucceſsfully contributed to call forth the public ſpirit in November 1792, has excited and directed this audacious attempt againſt our beloved Sovereign, with a view to

to overthrow our happy conſtitution :—under theſe impreſſions, this Committee again think it neceſſary to appeal to the approved loyalty and energy of their countrymen, and to call for ſome new expreſſion of their perſevering determination to defend his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, as well as the liberty and property of the ſubject.

It had been the intention of this Committee to declare for themſelves, and for ſuch as might concur with them in opinion, particularly for the members of this and of the many other reſpectable Aſſociations in the metropolis and parts adjacent, thoſe ſentiments which the preſent emergency appears ſo ſtrongly to demand. But a copy of an Addreſs, intended to be preſented to his Majeſty, having been laid before the Committee, in which, beſides the moſt ſuitable expreſſions of affection to his Majeſty and attachment to our ancient and tried conſtitution, the dangerous influence of ſeditious clubs, debates, lectures, and meetings is clearly ſet forth, together with humble and dutiful ſuggeſtions to his Majeſty, ſtating the neceſſity of taking, with the advice of his Parliament, ſuch meaſures as may be adequate to reſtrain the extreme and dangerous licentiouſneſs of the ill-diſpoſed, the Committee have deemed it more expedient to adopt the ſaid Addreſs, as ſufficiently expreſſive of their own ſentiments in all eſſential points; and they have therefore

Reſolved,

That this Committee will individually ſubſcribe their names to the ſaid Addreſs, purporting to be a loyal Addreſs to his Majeſty, from ſuch inhabitants of the metropolis and parts adjacent as ſhall ſign their names thereto, and now lying at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, and the Star and Garter, in Pall Mall, for ſignatures.

Reſolved alſo,

That it be recommended by this Committee to all the members of this and ſuch other loyal Aſſociations as have been formed in the metropolis and parts adjacent to peruſe the ſaid Addreſs, and, if it meet their approbation, to add to it their ſignatures, in order to demonſtrate to the diſaffected, however inſidious and perſevering they may be, that the deſigns againſt our beloved Monarch and much valued conſtitution are perfectly underſtood, and will conſequently be diſappointed by the irreſiſtible union of all good men in ſupport of law, order, and government.

Committee-Room, Beaufort Buildings, Nov. 13, 1795.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

THE Petitions to the three branches of the Government, voted on the 12th inſtant, near Copenhagen Houſe, now lie for ſignatures at the following places :

J. Aſhley's, No. 6, Fiſher-ſtreet, Red lion-ſquare,
T. Spence's, Little Turnſtile, Holborn,
J. Thelwall's, Beaufort Buildings, Strand,
J. Smith's, Portſmouth-ſtreet, Lincoln's-inn-fields,
T. Ballard's, May's-buildings, Covent Garden,
Lee's, bookſeller, oppoſite Buckingham-ſtreet, Strand,

 D. J. Eaton's,

D. I. Eaton's, Newgate-ſtreet,
R. Hodgſon's, hatter, Broadway, Weſtminſter,
Bone's, No. 8, Weſton-ſtreet, Snowfields, Southwark,
B. Peacock's, Globe-ſtairs, Rotherhithe,
Meaſon's, No. 8, New-ſtreet, Walworth,
Cooper's, grocer, No. 67, New Compton-ſtreet, Soho,
J. Maxwell's, cheeſemonger, No. 39, Broad-ſtreet, Bloomſbury,
Ridgway, York-ſtreet, St. James-ſquare,
Burks, No. 74, Sun-ſtreet, Biſhopſgate,
Clayton, No. 66, Maiden-lane, Southwark,
George Place, No. 6, William-ſtreet, Walcot Place,
Thomas Hartley, No. 4, Proſpect Place, St. George's Fields,
Franklow, Pitt-ſtreet, Blackfriar's-road,
Page, No. 14, Stangate-ſtreet, Lambeth,
Cherton, No. 38, Bethnal-Green Road,
Rouſe, ſtaymaker, Colcheſter-ſtreet, Whitechapel,
Lunam, No. 18, Whitcombe-ſtreet, Charing Croſs.
And the Telegraph Office, Fleet-ſtreet,

This Society call upon their countrymen to be as active for their own ſalvation, as the Miniſtry are zealous for the enſlavement of the nation: delay or indifference may be fatal.

Grenville's Bill has already paſſed the Houſe of Peers, and it may be hurried through the Lower Houſe in the ſame manner that Pitt procured the firſt reading of his; this is, perhaps, the laſt effort you may now purſue in ſafety;—a few days more, and it would be a crime at the diſcretion of Miniſters.

The neceſſity of an immediate circulation of the Proceedings of the Society has conſiderably narrowed their funds; the friends of their country, and thoſe who wiſh to promote general information, will forward that object by ſuch ſubſcriptions as they may think proper to leave at any of the above places.

J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY MEETING.

IN conſequence of an application from many of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the county of Buckingham, (notified to me by the Marquis of Buckingham, Cuſtos Rotulorum of the ſaid county,) requeſting that a Meeting of the county ſhould be called, to conſider of an Addreſs to the King, in conſequence of the daring and alarming outrage offered to his Majeſty, in his paſſage to and from the Parliament, on the firſt day of the preſent Seſſion—I do accordingly appoint a Meeting to be held at the County Hall in Ayleſbury, on Saturday the 21ſt day of this inſtant November, at twelve o'clock at noon.

LOVELL BADCOCK, Sheriff.

Little Miſſenden, Nov. 10, 1795.

BRITISH

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, NOV. 12.

ON the report of the Treaſon and Sedition Bill,

THE DUKE OF LEEDS renewed his motion of amendment, for correcting the words—"the eſtabliſhed Government and Conſtiſtution of this realm," which were ſo equivocal and indefinite, that no certainty could be obtained as to the true meaning. The noble and learned Lord on the woolſack had ſaid, that his mind was not made up on the objection which he had made the day before in the Committee. He hoped the noble and learned Lord had now had time to reflect on the ſubject; and he ſhould therefore move—firſt, to leave out the words "eſtabliſhed Government;" and he ſhould afterwards move to inſert, after the word, "Conſtitution," the words, "conſiſting of King, Lords, and Commons." He concluded with moving the firſt amendment.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR lamented that he had not yet had time to make up his mind on the alteration which the noble Duke had ſuggeſted. The Houſe had ſat ſo late, and his other avocations this day had been ſo preſſing that he had been unable to attend to it; he had, however, reflected on the ſubject, and words had occurred to him that he thought might ſatisfy the noble Duke. The words ſuggeſted by the noble Duke were liable to an objection, as ſeditious expreſſions might ſtill be ſpoken of Government. He would adviſe therefore to add, after the word "Conſtitution," thoſe words, "as by law eſtabliſhed," which would tie and bind up the whole together. But as theſe were merely his firſt reflections, he wiſhed the nobleDuke would defer his motion till the third reading.

THE DUKE OF LEEDS acquieſced in his requeſt, and withdrew his motion.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD expreſſed a wiſh that their Lordſhips would ſtill conſider the firſt part of the Bill, and ſeparate diſtinctly what ſeemed, in its preſent ſtate, to confound the ſafety of the King's Perſon, and attempts againſt the Government. As far as related to the compaſſing the death of the King, the law had wiſely made it a capital offence, becauſe after it was once intended, it became a matter of much eaſe to carry that intent into execution. There was ſo ſhort an interval between the intention and the execution of it, that the deſign might be ſaid to be inſtantaneouſly effected. In the caſe of compaſſing to levy war, it was far different;

 there

there the laws could prevent the mifchief, and were already fufficient for it, long before the intent could by any poffibility be carried into execution. The only purpofe it would effect, would be to facrifice, perhaps, fome zealous fanatic, who might incite and compafs the levying war, which, he would fay, he never could effectuate, or which the laws now exifting were fully competent to crufh before the plan could gain maturity. He thought that any extenfion of the treafon laws was a matter worthy of deep confideration, and extremely delicate in the prefent day; and he was forry to think that Minifters had taken their precedents from barbarous, he had almoft faid, dark and barbarous times, in no manner analogous to the prefent. It therefore was the duty of Minifters to act with the greateft caution and deliberation.

LORD GRENVILLE hoped the noble Duke would at leaft give Minifters credit, that when they deemed fuch a Bill neceffary, they gave it every confideration, not only as to the meafure in general, but as to the extent to which it ought to be carried. He faw but little difference between compaffing againft the natural life of the King, and againft his political life, by the levying of war, which, in its event, muft probably terminate the fame; for, it was his Majefty's moft facred duty, if circumftances fhould require it, to protect the conftitution in perfon; and he was fure, if ever the times fhould require the performance of that duty, it would be executed by the prefent Sovereign with ardour and alacrity. The peculiar exigencies of the times muft always be the bafis of legiflation. Whenever a peculiar evil predominates, it muft be met by its appropriate remedy. At one time it might be more eafy to incite the minds of men againft the perfon of a Monarch, at another time it might with greater facility be attempted to attack him in his political character. Such reafons would therefore prove the neceffity of different meafures at different times. In this they were not following the practice of rude and barbarous ages, but purfuing the conduct adopted by all preceding legiflators; for, by the Statute-book it would appear, with the exception of only one reign, perhaps, that provifions were, reign after reign, made againft the feveral forts of treafons, which, from the exigencies of the times were thought to be apprehended. In this meafure, therefore, they had only followed the continued ufage and practice of their anceftors.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD faid, in calling upon Minifters to abandon a part of their Bill, he thought he did not throw any reflection upon their previous confideration of it, becaufe they had already themfelves abandoned feveral parts of the Bill. In refpect

to what had been urged by the noble Lord, of the continued practice of making treaſon laws for the exigency of the moment, the noble Secretary would be ſo good as to recollect, that the caſe was at this time far different from any former one. In ſeveral former reigns, the King's title had been called in queſtion. His preſent Majeſty was the firſt who, for ſeveral reigns, could be ſaid to be firmly ſeated on his throne. His predeceſſors had not been without pretenders to their crowns, and thoſe pretenders were ſupported by many adherents. This offered ſome apology for ſuch extenſion of the criminal code; but he again declared it was impoſſible at this time to carry the compaſſing to levy war into immediate effect; while, on the contrary, from the practice of civilized nations, as a Monarch was not always ſurrounded with his guards, any one almoſt might take his natural life, who would riſk his own in the attempt. This was ſufficient ground, in his mind, to make a diſtinction in the puniſhment. He lamented we ſhould be extending our criminal code, while all civilized countries were contracting theirs. Men, indeed, began to think that they had not that extenſive right over the lives of their fellow-creatures, unleſs, where by murder they ſhewed themſelves obnoxious to their ſpecies.

The report was then read, and the Bill ordered to be printed, and read a third time to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

The Master of the Rolls preſented a Petition from the inhabitants of Bath, ſtating their abhorrence of the atrocious inſult offered to his Majeſty on the firſt day of the preſent ſeſſion of Parliament; their belief it was connected with certain clubs, meetings,. and ſocieties held in and about the metropolis; and praying that, if the laws are inadequate to the prevention of ſuch outrages in future, they may be amended, &c.—Ordered to be laid on the table.

Lord William Russel roſe, and ſaid, that as there appeared to be no buſineſs before the Houſe, he moved "That it ſhould now adjourn."

Mr. Secretary Dundas obſerved, that the preſent motion was not conſiſtent with that ſort of civility which was commonly obſerved on occaſions of importance. He therefore hoped the Noble Lord would not perſiſt in his motion.

Mr. Grey ſaid, he did not think that the attempt which had been juſt made to rebuke his Noble Friend was juſtified upon this occaſion.

occaſion. It was not matter of ſurpriſe to him to hear that an attempt was to be made to bring forward the Bill to prevent public meetings. It was a matter of too much importance to be brought forward in ſo haſty a manner, and without that ſort of notice which had been uſual upon ſuch occaſions.——This was no better than an attempt to ſurpriſe many gentlemen whom the Miniſter knew to be inimical to the Bill, and to ſmuggle the Bill through one of its ſtages; for he had not heard that any ſuch thing was intended to be done to-night, until after he had come to the Houſe. He thought therefore that his Noble Friend's motion was perfectly right, for there were many gentlemen who would wiſh to take part in the diſcuſſion of this alarming meaſure, but who were not now in the Houſe, becauſe they had no idea that the Bill was to be brought forward. He thought himſelf, under all the circumſtances, called upon to ſupport the motion for adjournment.

Mr. M. Robinson ſupported the motion alſo. He thought the Bill itſelf highly injurious to the intereſts of the public; but for Miniſters to complain of the motion to adjourn ſuch a ſubject as this, was to add an inſult to an injury. If Miniſters were determined to carry this Bill through, it was to be remembered there was an ultimate reſource for the people—they had a power in themſelves——[Here there was a great cry of order! order! and Mr. Robinſon ſat down.]

Lord William Russel ſaid, he ſhould perſiſt in his motion, notwithſtanding the accuſation againſt him of the want of civility upon this occaſion. He perſiſted in the motion for adjournment, becauſe there was nothing like a notice given that this Bill was to be brought forward to-night. Indeed he could not have thought it poſſible that any Miniſter would have dared to bring forward now, without notice, a Bill which tended to annihilate the popular part of the conſtitution of England.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he ſhould not detain the Houſe a moment longer than was neceſſary. Not many minutes had elapſed ſince he came to the Houſe: gentlemen complained extremely of the bringing forward of this Bill without notice. What notice did they mean? There was a reſolution of the Houſe itſelf, commanding certain members to prepare and bring in this Bill without delay. He was one of thoſe members, and he ſhould be guilty of a breach of his duty if he delayed the bringing in of the Bill a moment after it was prepared: for the orders of the Houſe, eſpecially when it commanded its own members, ſhould be punctually complied with. He

ſhould have preſented that Bill at the bar within a few ſeconds, but for the motion for adjournment. It was on the day he moved for leave to bring in the Bill that he agreed to the call of the Houſe, but he then ſtated what he ſhould ſtate now, that the call ſhould not delay the progreſs of the Bill up to the third reading: he ſaid then he ſhould in a day or two name an early day for the ſecond reading; and now the Houſe were to be called upon to go on with a meaſure under circumſtances that required there ſhould be no delay; circumſtances of no leſs importance, ſince the Houſe agreed that the Bill ſhould be brought in. The queſtion for the Houſe now was, Whether they would ſupport their own dignity? Whether they would perform their duty to themſelves, their Sovereign, and to their country, and ſuffer him to go to that bar and preſent the Bill which had been prepared by their order for the ſafety of the country, and to protect it from the deſperate attempts of deſperate men, who ſeemed to be plotting its deſtruction.

Mr. Lambton ſaid, that in every view of the ſubject, he was of opinion that his Noble Friend was juſtified in bringing forward his motion, becauſe it was not generally underſtood that the firſt reading of the Bill was to be moved this day. It was certainly uſual to give notice when an important Bill was to be brought in and read a firſt time; however, in point of ſtrictneſs of form, the Miniſter was regular. But when he told the Houſe that the Bill was become the more neceſſary from recent tranſactions, [a great cry of hear! hear!] Mr. Lambton ſaid they ſhould hear. He knew to what the Right Honourable Gentleman alluded; he alluded to an attempt to convene the people to oppoſe this Bill. They ought to be convened to oppoſe it, for it was a Bill which, if paſſed, would accompliſh the deſtruction of their liberties. The people, notwithſtanding all the threats of Miniſters, would meet, and would determine againſt this meaſure. He had no doubt that the great majority would ſhew their abhorrence of this Bill; they were not to be deterred by the fear of being called deſperate men, becauſe they ſaid to their countrymen, "Conſider this meaſure well, deliberate upon it, look at it, ſee the effect of it. If you think it a deteſtable meaſure, ſay ſo, petition the King and Parliament, and exert your beſt rights."

Mr. Curwen was of opinion alſo, that notice ſhould have been given of an intention to bring in this Bill this day. He thought the meaſure ought not to be hurried through any of its ſtages, until the call ſhould take place; meaſures that were expedient and juſtifiable courted diſcuſſion as their beſt ſupport.

When

When a Bill was to be introduced which materially affected the rights of the people, he thought they ought to meet and fairly discuſs the meaſure; if their rights were to be ſurrendered, they at leaſt ought to be parties to it; if the people ſhould meet and conſent to ſlavery, for his part he ſhould not lament to ſee them bound in chains. He was attached, he ſaid, to the intereſts of good government, and he would therefore wiſh to ſecure to that government the attachment of the people, without which it could not permanently ſubſiſt. He would therefore adviſe Miniſters not to hurry the preſent Bill through the Houſe with an intemperate and impolitic haſte; he hoped that the Right Honourable Gentleman would not perſevere in his deſign of moving the firſt reading of the Bill that night, in the abſence of thoſe great men to whoſe talents the people looked for the maintenance of their liberty; and when a meaſure was to be diſcuſſed which made the exertions of theſe talents neceſſary to the exiſtence of the conſtitution.

Mr. Courtenay ſaid, a Right Honourable Secretary had ſtated on another night, that, if the people were againſt the meaſure, Miniſters would not preſs it on the Houſe, and yet they would go through all the firſt ſtages of the Bill before they take the collective opinion of the people's repreſentatives. The ſame Right Honourable Gentleman had alſo ſaid, that the Bill was in agitation before the late attack on the Sovereign; ſtill that attack was made, by another Miniſter, the ground, or rather the pretext, for introducing this Bill; a Bill to which he could not give epithets ſtrong enough to ſhew his ſenſe of diſapprobation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had, it was true, ſaid he would produce the Bill in a day or two; but why did he not mention the day particularly? He certainly well knew the preciſe hour and moment that he would bring it forward—why then ſhould he not be explicit? He would tell the Right Honourable Gentleman why; becauſe he wanted to ſmuggle it through the Houſe in the abſence of the moſt diſtinguiſhed members of the oppoſition. He hoped, however, that he would not be able to ſmuggle it through the kingdom, though he might through that Houſe; but that the indignant ſpirit of the people would give it a ſucceſsful reſiſtance. He hoped that they would not tamely ſubmit to have their deareſt rights invaded by the moſt contemptible, incapable, and arbitrary Miniſtry that ever diſgraced the country.

Mr. Secretary Dundas ſaid, that the gentlemen invented words for him that were not ſaid by him, and proceeded to argue upon them as if he had ſaid them, although they had not the leaſt

resemblance to what he said. When the call of the House was mentioned, he said "it was his opinion, that unless this Bill had the wish of the country it ought not to pass," and therefore he seconded the motion for the call of the House.

MR. BRANDLING professed a great desire to protect the constitution from any attempts whatever to overturn it. But he had also a desire that no unnecessary restraints should be laid on the people. He thought that great care ought to be taken to examine the provisions of the Bill, and to see that they contain nothing hostile to the interest of the people. But he thought that an evil does exist, and that some remedy should be applied to it.

MR. DUNCOMB said, he was not in the House when this subject was brought forward. It was now proposed that the Bill be brought in; he should not oppose that, but he wanted to know when the principle of the Bill was to be chiefly discussed. Was the call of the House to take place before the second reading of the Bill? He wished for information from the Minister on that point, because that might determine him.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that he should propose that the Bill be now brought up, and that it should proceed through all its stages up to the third reading, but that the third reading should not take place until after the call of the House. He should, after the first reading, move that the Bill be printed, and propose the second reading on Tuesday next.

GENERAL M'LEOD said, that he should vote for the question of Adjournment; and that he should be very sorry if it should not be carried; because every step of precipitancy which Ministers took in this flagitious measure, tended to shew the people what sort of a thing it was, and to shew that Ministers are ashamed of it.

The question of Adjournment was then put and negatived.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER then brought up the Bill; the title being read, and the question put, "That this Bill be now read a first time?"

MR. LAMBTON said, it was not his intention to debate the principles of the Bill at length on that day, but he would make a few remarks, even it that early stage. He alluded to what Mr. Alderman Lushington had said on a former night. That worthy Magistrate had asked, who could doubt that the meaning of those who met at Copenhagen-house was, to excite that spirit which afterwards broke out in an outrage against his Majesty? But could the worthy Alderman prove, to the satisfaction of the House, any connection between those who attended that meeting and the

persons

persons who had so daringly insulted his Majesty? He should have shewed some connection between the two, before he drew a conclusion that the one was the result of the other. The House should recollect how the Minister had acted, when he caused the Habeas Corpus Act to be suspended. There there was a little decent delay, for the case was referred to a Committee to examine evidence, and to make their report to the House. Some regard was had to form in that business, although finally it appeared, after full trial, that the whole charge was groundless. There was nothing now, by way of evidence, of the existence of any plot, but the Proclamation. This was the work of Ministers, who came to that House with it, and said, "It is our will that you believe every word of it."

Sic volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas.

Mr. Canning supported the motion for reading the Bill. He was of opinion there was an intimate connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house and the disgraceful outrage which followed. An attempt had been made against the King, and a doctrine was preached on the practice of "King-killing." The doctrine was preached, and the attempt was made.

The designs of the speakers were not disguised; they publicly declaimed against Majesty and Government. He did not then see how gentlemen could be so blind to plain and evident facts; they wanted to disguise what the declaimers and orators had no idea in concealing. If, then, the attack on our most gracious Sovereign immediately followed the circulation of such abominable doctrine, he did not see how the connection could be discredited. There was a plea used, it was true, that they were assembled for the purpose of petitioning Parliament; but this, it was easy to perceive, was only a pretext to deceive.

Mr. Stanley said, he could not hear this without calling to order. A meeting was held, and the doctrine of King-killing preached at it—This was disorderly. Could the House hear of such preaching?

The Speaker said, he submitted to the House whether the Honourable Member transgressed any rules when he was called to order? Had he thought so he should have called him to order.

Mr. Canning then proceeded. He said that his argument was simply this: an attempt had been made of a heinous nature. It was made at the time when the doctrine was held forth, and yet some gentlemen would still say that the doctrine and the fact have no connection. The House had agreed that a Bill should

be

be brought up, and yet some gentlemen would have them persevere in the ignorance of its contents.

Mr. Lambton said, he had heard some persons talk of hand-bills, in which the doctrine of King-killing was inculcated. He never saw any such hand-bill, and he did not believe there was any foundation for charging it to those who composed that meeting.

Lord William Russel adverted also to the hand-bill which had been mentioned to contain the doctrine of King-killing, and declared upon his honour he had never before this time heard of it. He did not believe it; however, if such a hand-bill had really been distributed, he would ask whether there were not laws enough in force to punish those who had been guilty? He thought there must be law against treason.

Mr. Sheridan observed, that an Honourable Gentleman had stated, that there was a connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-house and the insult which had been offered to his Majesty. He here alledged that the doctrine of King-killing had been inculcated by distributing a hand-bill. Now the connection that he wanted was a connection between what that Gentleman said and the fact; for until he gave some proof of it, it was a little too much to call on the House to come to that conclusion. For his own part he declared his utter disbelief of it. There might, indeed, be hand-bills written and distributed, and most probably were so, as others had been before them, by spies and informers. He was warranted in saying this, for practices of this kind had been proved. Ministers had propagated things of this kind frequently through the medium of their scandalous and disgraceful tools. Could that be doubted? Had it not been stated at the Old Bailey by Lynam, one of the informers, who admitted that he was paid by Government for what he did, and that he was obliged to make extravagant speeches and propositions in some meetings to prevent his being suspected as a spy?

If, therefore, there were any of these hand-bills distributed at Copenhagen-house, the probability was, that the persons who did so were the spies of Government, and that they were paid for it at the Treasury. That was his belief. Now with regard to this meeting, what was the probability of this doctrine of King-killing having been held forth? The meeting was not in a close room or a place that was inaccessible. Did any person there shew such a determination? It was not a meeting where clamour was general, which is sometimes the case at public places. It was a meeting where lectures were delivered from particular places

erected for that purpose, and if there had been held forth the doctrine of King-killing, it was utterly impossible for the thing to pass by without being noticed. The notoriety of the whole proceeding proved the falsity of the assertion. There was but little doubt but that it would have been soon put into a train of proof: and now that this subject had taken this turn; as so much stress had been laid on the connection between the proceedings at these meetings and the insult offered to the King, he should take the liberty of moving for a Committee to inquire into the facts, as was done in that House on the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. This he thought it his duty to do on account of the manner in which Ministers had treated the subject. They had in the King's Speech asserted that almost all discontent was put an end to, and now they alledge it was so great as to make necessary more rigorous measures than any that have been proposed since the Revolution. He believed, indeed, that Ministers endeavoured to impose on the public in this, as they had done on a former occasion.

Mr. M. Robinson thought that the insult to his Majesty, on the day of his meeting the Parliament, would not have happened, had the officers on duty taken care to have provided a sufficient number of guards. He called upon the House to pause, and seriously to think of the step they were now about to take. The reign of the House of Brunswick had been attended with many auspicious circumstances to this country; and sorry should he be, by any proceedings in Parliament, to give a colour to the aspect of the reign of this House, quite different from that in which it had been usual to behold it. He feared that if this Bill were pushed through the House, instead of confirming the liberties of their country, they would be chargeable with giving to their country, not only a wound, but also a death-blow.

Mr. Curwen asked if pamphlets, such as he had heard stated to-night, had really been distributed, where had Government been? Why did they not prosecute the authors? There was no man in that House more ready than he was to agree to a law to punish those who shall be found guilty of any insult to his Majesty, or who endeavoured to overturn the constitution; but before he agreed to any new law, he must be convinced that the present law is inadequate. With regard to the present Bill, he was sure it was one which required the mature deliberation of the public. If there be plots, let us have evidence of them. But before we proceed to measures of this kind we should be very cautious. If we looked to history we should find no instance of such a measure, not even upon the most critical occasions. Nothing short

of

of making it impoſſible for the people to make known any of their complaints he believed was intended. The ſocieties he believed would, at laſt, give the Right Honourable Gentleman a colour for paſſing ſuch a Bill, a Bill that ſtruck at the root of freedom! He had a family; and he wiſhed to bequeath his fortune and liberty to his children. He was a lover of the conſtitution of his country, and he wiſhed to tranſmit it to poſterity; but he deſpaired ſo to do if the Bill paſſed into a law. He wiſhed, at leaſt, to have ſome precedents. Did the country, he aſked, in times of the greateſt danger reſort to ſuch a meaſure? If the Bill paſſed, he contended, the third clauſe of the Bill of Rights, which enabled the people to petition, was no more. It was ſaid by Miniſters, that they would not go againſt the voice of the people. Let, then, the ſentiments of the people be aſcertained, and do not paſs the meaſure by ſurprize. He was ready to accede to any meaſure which would not fetter. But he cautioned gentlemen how they ſhackled a free people! He adviſed rather the calling Miniſters to an account, for expending the public money on a moſt deſtructive war; a war which gave riſe to all the preſent grievances and diſturbance.

Mr. Alderman Lushington ſaid, he had ſeen no reaſon to change the opinion which he gave upon this ſubject on a former night, which was, that there was a connection between the proceedings at Copenhagen-Houſe, and other meetings in and about the metropolis, and that cowardly attempt on the Sovereign. He repreſented a numerous body of men, and they felt the impreſſion that he did; they thought that ſome meaſure ought to be adopted; but it ought to be that which had all poſſible tenderneſs for public rights. He would ſubmit to a partial and temporary ſacrifice for the general good; but he was ready to ſay that he did not wiſh the meaſure propoſed by this Bill made a permanent law of this country. He ſhould wiſh to ſee it made nothing more than an annual regulation at moſt.

General Smith thought it would be right that the Houſe ſhould know what the Bill was.

After a few words between Mr. Grey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Speaker, as to the form of debating the Bill in its preſent ſtage,

Mr. Grey proceeded. He ſaid, that on the preſent occaſion he did not mean to enter at large into the Bill. He roſe chiefly for the purpoſe of entering his proteſt againſt the time that had been choſen for bringing it forward. There ought to have been notice given of its being to be brought forward; but this was not

the caſe, and the conſequence was, that the Bill was to be propoſed to paſs one ſtage in the abſence of ſome of the moſt eloquent members of that Houſe.

He had heard a good deal on the connection that was alledged to ſubſiſt between the proceedings at Copenhagen-houſe and the late inſult which had been offered to his Majeſty. Upon the ſubject of that outrage, he felt as a good ſubject ought to feel upon that deteſtable act; but from a view of all the evidence that he knew of, he was happy to ſay he did not believe, that in the outrage which was offered to the King any perſon had any thought of affecting the life of his Majeſty. He was far from thinking, however, that the authors of the outrage ought not to be puniſhed; puniſhed they ought to be, and that with the utmoſt rigour of the law, for he was of opinion, that, if any man does that which his reaſon ought to tell him muſt bring on the death of the King, he is guilty of treaſon, without, in his own mind, intending to kill the King. But, although this was his opinion decidedly, yet he did not wiſh it to go to the country, that he was of opinion there was one individual who had any idea of aſſaſſinating the King. He did not believe that the inſult to his Majeſty originated at Copenhagen-houſe. It was ſaid, that the doctrine of King-killing was preached there. He did not know one word of that. He was indeed informed that a hand-bill was circulated which ſtated ſomething, what he could not tell, about King-killing. Now then to ſay what he felt upon this ſubject. The Bill was unneceſſary, becauſe he thought the laws already in exiſtence ſufficient to repreſs the evil. If Miniſters had neglected to proſecute thoſe who had baſely made an attack upon the life of our Sovereign, was that a reaſon why all the liberties of the people of England ſhould be taken from them?

An Honourable Friend of his had ſtated what ſeemed to have been treated with deriſion. That if theſe hand-bills were diſtributed at the meeting at Copenhagen-houſe, they muſt have been diſtributed by perſons who were employed for that purpoſe. He could not help thinking that thoſe who were ſerious in committing the act, would not have taken that mode, becauſe he could not believe that ſuch perſons, with ſuch views, would have ran the riſk to which, by that mode, they muſt be expoſed. But he could conceive what had been heard in evidence and proof, that perſons employed as ſpies, or rather, to uſe the more faſhionable phraſe, "employed as reporters," perſons wiſhing to make their information the more valuable, had done it. We had proof of this at the Old Bailey. He would aſk, whether ſome of theſe

perſons had not uſed the moſt violent language? Had not a perſon been executed at Edinburgh who was a ſpy, acting upon the order of Miniſters and paid by them, and on whom, there being no other perſon, they inflicted the penalty of death? He did not believe there was any thing at the meetings about the metropolis to provoke this outrage to his Majeſty, and therefore he did not believe there was any connection between them; and he could not, on that ground, give his countenance to a law by which all our liberties were to be rooted up; and he could not help deploring the ſtate of the people of this country at this moment; they had felt the effects of famine laſt year to a certain extent, and they had a proſpect of feeling it again, and this Bill was intended to put it out of their power to make any complaint. Their mouths are to be ſhut, although they are to be ruled with a rod of iron. This was a Bill that he ſhould oppoſe in that Houſe and out of that Houſe; and, if he ſhould be ſo fortunate as to contribute to the reprobation of it on the part of the people, and to which, he hoped, their attention would be directed, he ſhould think he had done conſiderable ſervice to his country.

The neceſſity of vigorous meaſures was pleaded as an irreſiſtible argument in ſupport of the Bill. In reply to all ſuch arguments, he aſked, if the laws which had been found ſufficient for the protection of the Sovereign in paſt times, were not ſufficient in the preſent? Did not the ſame law of treaſon which now exiſts, protect the perſon of King William, when the nation was torn with inteſtine broils, and when a ſtrong party in the kingdom were combined againſt his life; and was not the life of King William as precious to the country then as the life of George the Third is precious now, important even as it may be? What, then, was there in the preſent criſis, which rendered it unſafe to commit the perſonal ſecurity of the Sovereign to a law, which never has been found inſufficient for its protection, even in the time of two actual rebellions? Before he ſat down, he could not but proteſt againſt the mode of procedure which the Miniſter had adopted. He aſſented to the call of the Houſe; but inſtead of giving the members an opportunity of delivering their ſentiments upon the various particulars of the Bill, he was endeavouring to carry it through every ſtage but the laſt, before he deigned to aſk their opinion. Such conduct he conſidered as an evidence of bad deſign, and as impertinent mockery, rather than of the proper reſpect due from a Miniſter of the Crown to a Britiſh Houſe of Commons.

MR. DUNCOMB conſidered the attack on the perſon of the

King as a mean insult, a degradation of the national character. He wished to see the kingly part of our constitution protected, but he must remember that there was another part of our constitution that called for the protection of that House, as well as the kingly part, and that was the democratical part of our constitution.

He had heard of late meetings, accounts that gave him much concern; but if they had been guilty of any excess, they were amenable to the law; if they are not so, make a law to reach them; but do not interfere with the rights of the people; they were sacred rights. This doctrine he held to be fundamental with regard to our constitution. He had thought a good deal on the nature of the Bill which was now offered to the House, and he thought it was more important than any thing that has ever been brought into that House since the Revolution. We had been grovelling under the despotism of the House of Stuart, and yet so desperate a measure was not advised under them. He had no objection to the conduct of the meetings, if they were as they had been stated to him. The Minister, whose measures he had for a long while supported, should not despise popular meetings; for in addition to his own merit, he was considerably recommended to the favour of his Majesty by the opinion which the people had expressed of him; and he trusted that the Minister would not now kick off the ladder by which he got into his power. Having said this of the Minister, he must now return to the Bill now offered to the House. He disapproved of the system on which it was founded. There was no truth in the foundation. He thought it to ingraft on that love which we bear to the Sovereign; a measure which, he thought, with the generality of the country, had been already disapproved. There would remain other opportunities to discuss this Bill. Perhaps he should take the liberty of delivering his sentiments again upon this Bill; he could not say he could accede to it in its present form. He could not join those, who, with a sacrilegious hand, would thus invade the palladium of our liberty. He did not like to assault those out-works and barriers of freedom which our ancestors had erected for us.

Mr. Wilberforce said, that he felt the utmost regret upon the present occasion to find himself under the necessity of differing with his Honourable Friend (Mr. Duncomb) with whom, upon every constitutional question, he had formerly enjoyed the happiness to agree. He was sure, however, that the sentiments his Honourable Friend had expressed were dictated by his total misconception of the Bill. He was sorry that, when notice of it was

firſt given, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not gone at greater length into the nature of it, to prevent any miſtake or miſrepreſentation of its contents; a precaution which, he was now the more convinced, was extremely neceſſary. When his Honourable Friend talked of the bars and mounds erected round to protect, what he juſtly ſtiled, the palladium of Britiſh liberty, being overthrown, he was not aware that this very Bill raiſed new baſtions for its ſecurity, and ſtrengthened, not weakened, the bulwarks by which it was defended. There was nothing contained in it that, in his apprehenſion, touched on the eſſential right of the conſtitution. It aboliſhed none of the privileges which Engliſhmen could legally exerciſe. The right of holding popular aſſemblies and of diſcuſſing public affairs, was preſerved by this Bill to every extent which ought to be permitted, or which the exiſting laws authoriſed. The people will retain, as before, the exerciſe of all their conſtitutional functions unmoleſted by buſy and ill-deſigning men. In ſhort, he thought that every privilege and every principle which is dear to Engliſhmen was at ſtake, and that this Bill alone could ſave them from irrecoverable ruin. His Right Honourable Friend, with whoſe rectitude of mind he was well acquainted, was, he was happy to declare, entitled to, and did poſſeſs, the grateful eſteem and warm attachment of the people of this country, by his ſtrict adherence to conſtitutional principles from which he had not deviated; and he could boldly aſſert, that his Right Honourable Friend's reputation would not be diminiſhed by the operations of the Bill which he had brought forward. That as a friend to the conſtitution, to public diſcuſſion, and the indiſputable right of petitioning, he would, for the purpoſe of more effectually ſecuring that right, give his warmeſt ſupport to the meaſure.

General Tarleton ſaid, that he had heard expreſſions employed this night which he did not underſtand, and which called ſeriouſly on the attention of the Houſe, and required an explanation. Much had been ſpoken of certain hand-bills, in which the doctrine of King-killing was inculcated, and the practice recommended. For his part he had never heard that ſuch hand-bills exiſted, and he thought it highly proper that the Honourable Gentleman who had introduced this ſubject ſhould explain to the Houſe upon what authority the aſſertion was made, and from what ſources he derived his information.

He could not follow the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) through his ancient and modern fortifications. The Hon. Gentleman ſeemed to have walked with tottering ſteps over this new

ground, and had ſtumbled over the parapet of prerogative into the ditch of deſpotiſm. It was unneceſſary to ſtrip him of that pomp of language, that ſolemnity of manner, which he had affected; thoſe ſophiſticated ſentiments with which he attempted to colour his ſupport of the preſent meaſure. He obſerved that wars now became unpopular in proportion to their duration. Amidſt the load of national debt, and the taxes with which the people were burthened, the reſources of a ſtate were ſoon exhauſted. He hoped he would incur no ridicule, if he reminded the Houſe of an obſervation he had made upon the diſcuſſion of a motion of his Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox) at the beginning of the war three years ago, that he was ſure the war, were it undertaken, would produce ultimately either anarchy or deſpotiſm. Have not the reſources of this country been ſtretched in the courſe of it to an unparalleled degree? Is it not true that diſcontents have been excited by the ſhameleſs conduct of Adminiſtration; by their daring expedients, and by the preſſure of that famine to which they have expoſed the people of this country? By the eloquence, the indefatigable activity, and addreſs of Miniſters, the war was in its commencement rendered popular, and the ſyſtem of artifice, deluſion, and calumny, had induſtriouſly been employed to ſupport it. Now it appeared that the caſe was reverſed, and the arts of Miniſters could no longer ſcreen from unpopularity meaſures, the folly of which could not be concealed. He felt the principle of loyalty as ſtrong within him as any man could boaſt, and he deteſted from his ſoul the attempt againſt the perſon of his Majeſty, yet he could impute that diſcontent which had manifeſted itſelf, and much of that ſedition of which they complained, to the calamities with which the war had been attended, and the miſery it had generally diffuſed. He could not but feel the utmoſt ſurpriſe at the hypocriſy which Miniſters had diſplayed at the opening of the Seſſion, and the language which the Speech from the Throne had maintained. It appeared that the outrage committed againſt his Majeſty, with which he himſelf was then wholly unacquainted, had been perfectly well known to Miniſters, at the very moment when they allowed the Houſe to echo that part of the Speech, which expreſſed ſatisfaction at the ſpirit of order and ſubmiſſion to the laws which had been manifeſted in the country. In ſpite of this teſtimony of their own belief, and of the declaration into which they had betrayed the Houſe, they came forward in leſs than a fortnight, with a Bill of the moſt violent nature, and of the moſt unconſtitutional tendency, founded upon facts, which in no degree deterred them from maintaining arguments directly inconſiſtent with their preſent ſentiments and aſſertions.

GENERAL

General Smith said, he would reserve himself for the second reading, though he disapproved of the Bill. He wished that King-killing had not been mentioned; he did not think it a fit theme of discussion within these walls.

Sir William Milner said, that although he was not in the habit of obtruding himself upon the attention of the House, he could not be silent when a Bill of such magnitude as the present formed the subject of discussion. He would oppose it because he considered that it would not only be useless for the object to which it was directed, but would prove highly detrimental to the country. He was convinced that the persons who were guilty of the crimes it was intended to prevent might be punished by the existing laws. He was surprised at the observations of a worthy magistrate (Alderman Lushington) who complained of the inflammatory hand-bills which were daily circulated. Knowing such practices to take place, without attempting to repress them, involved no small share of blame on the part of the worthy magistrate. If not, he was afraid he might, as a magistrate, have exercised powers with which he was not invested, and assumed an authority not conferred by the laws:—he had sat, as a justice, upon the trial of persons accused of distributing inflammatory hand-bills, who, after being found guilty by the jury, had been condemned by the justices to two years imprisonment. At this very period he knew that there were two or three persons confined in the castle of York for this very offence. The crime of one Yorke, lately tried at the York assizes, was, his having uttered certain inflammatory speeches; and he had been convicted, and was to be brought to the King's Bench to receive sentence. These facts had come under his own observation; and he believed even the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not pretend to deny their truth, or the conclusions which necessarily flowed from them. He felt the highest indignation at any seditions attempts which might exist; and he thought Ministers ought to do their duty, in endeavouring to suppress illegal meetings, if such took place, and to give directions to magistrates to exert, for this purpose, the authority they possessed. He had heard of a meeting which had taken place this day, where, he understood, the most perfect peaceableness and decorum had prevailed. If this meeting was assembled for the purpose of petitioning the Legislature against this Bill, he highly approved of their design. The loyal yeomanry and gentry in various parts had met, and he hoped would meet, to give it their decided opposition. He felt extremely uneasy in differing with some friends on the other side of the House whom he highly esteemed, and whose opinion had so much influence with him that

he

he could hardly prevail on himſelf to vote againſt the Bill. On the ſubject of the war he had found himſelf under the neceſſity of differing with valued friends, eſpecially with one who had poſſeſſed a conſiderable office in Adminiſtration which he no longer held, with whom he had generally agreed on public affairs. He was a man attached to no party, and was equally indifferent whether the executive power was adminiſtered by the gentlemen on the one or the other ſide of the Houſe He was guided ſolely by motives of public utility and by the beſt of his judgment, though from his being little uſed to public ſpeaking he might be unable to explain his ſentiments with that eloquence which others could command, and a habit of ſpeaking might beſtow.

Mr. Alderman Anderson ſaid, that he had but newly arrived in town, and highly approved of the Bill, though he was not yet acquainted with its contents. He entertained the greateſt dread of the ſeditious meetings which had been held, and thought ſome ſtrong meaſure neceſſary to counteract them. In his journey to town, and in the immediate neighbourhood, he ſaw crowds of people, and enquiring the cauſe at a turnpike-bar, had been informed that it was a meeting of the Correſponding Society, which had diſperſed a good deal, diſappointed at an unlucky accident, by which Mr. Thelwall, one of their orators, had been deprived of a phaeton belonging to a certain noble Duke, of which he was to have had the loan, and from whence he meant to harrangue the multitude.

Mr. Stanley ſaid, the privileges of Engliſhmen were extinguiſhed, if they could not meet when and how they pleaſed for the diſcuſſion of public affairs. To render their conduct ſubject to the arbitrary controul and ſummary interference of a magiſtrate, the purity of whoſe views might be queſtionable, was inconſiſtent with every idea of freedom and of the conſtitution.

Mr. J. Hawkins Browne thought the Hon. Gentleman's reaſons againſt the Bill were the beſt that could be given for adopting it. If magiſtrates were corrupt or arbitrary in the execution of their duty, they were amenable to the laws.

Lord W. Russell ſaid, that as an imputation had been thrown out by a worthy Alderman againſt the character of a certain noble Duke, whom he thought it incumbent on the worthy Alderman to name, and to ſtate what reaſons he had to believe the ſtory which, improbable and fooliſh as it was, if not properly explained, might be propagated upon the ſlight foundation of what had been ſtated in the Houſe in a manner highly prejudicial to the character of the noble Duke alluded to, he would therefore move the debate be

ad-

adjourned, in order that an enquiry might take place into the facts which had been ſtated as reaſons for ſupporting the Bill—which motion was ſeconded.

Mr. Harrison obſerved that this was a freſh attempt to calumniate, by the vileſt and moſt deſpicable artifices, the character of thoſe who were bold enough to oppoſe the meaſures of Adminiſtration.

Alderman Anderson ſaid a few words about the right of members to ſtate ſuch circumſtances as might be connected with the queſtion. He had merely ſtated what he had heard in his way to town.

Mr. Lambton ſaid, he knew well that it was the wiſh of gentlemen on the other ſide of the Houſe to blacken and defame the character of thoſe who were moſt diſtinguiſhed for an oppoſition to their meaſures. It was a part of the foundation on which their ſyſtem was ſupported. If the worthy Alderman had acted as he ought to have done, and as candour and liberality dictated, he would have told the perſon who gave him the information, that it was impoſſible the matter could ſtand as repreſented, or that the noble perſon alluded to could in any way encourage ſeditious and diſloyal meetings, inſtead of coming to the Houſe with ſo poor and miſerable an anecdote, which could never impoſe upon any man who knew the noble Duke as he (Mr. Lambton) knew him, which might be ſerious in the conſequences it might produce, conſidering the activity with which it would be propagated. Similar falſehoods, and calumnies equally contemptible, had been employed to render ſuſpected ſome of his Honourable Friends:—It had been maliciouſly aſſerted, widely circulated, and, where the truth was not known, might even be believed, that letters had been intercepted from them to certain Members of the French Convention.—Such attacks could be encouraged only for the worſt of purpoſes, and merited the ſevereſt reprehenſion.

Mr. Dundas ſaid, that he believed nobody could ſeriouſly liſten to the ſtory they had heard. He was happy to find that the Hon. Gentleman was offended with the freedoms uſed with characters; and he hoped he would endeavour to impreſs the ſame ſentiment upon one of his Honourable Friends near him (Mr. Grey), who had accuſed Miniſters of having conſpired to murder one of their own ſpies. He treated with a good deal of ridicule the wiſh to adjourn the Houſe, in order to enquire whether ſuch a ſtory of a noble Duke were well or ill founded.

Lord W. Russell explained.

Mr. Grey ſaid, that he would not have riſen had it not been to

explain

explain himſelf on a point to which the Honourable Secretary of State had alluded. He never had meant to ſay that Miniſters had conſpired a deliberate murder, and if any thing that fell from him ſeemed to ſupport ſuch an idea, he wiſhed it to be conſidered merely as an inadvertency of expreſſion. He had formerly ſaid, that bad as his opinion of the preſent Miniſters certainly was, he did not believe they could go ſo far as to encourage, for their own purpoſes, any inflammatory hand-bills in which doctrines were inculcated, from which great miſchief might eventually ariſe. Yet it had appeared upon evidence during the State Trials, that miniſterial agents had taken an active part in popular meetings, and had uttered the moſt ſeditious ſpeeches, and promoted the moſt violent reſolutions.

Having diſpoſed of this, he ſaid he could not agree that the matter on which the adjournment was founded, though in itſelf there could not be a difference of opinion as to its folly and abſurdity, was altogether ſo unimportant. It was evident from the impreſſion made by it on the mind of the perſon by whom it was related, that it might be thought equally conſiderable by many others. It was ſtated as a reaſon for ſupporting the Bill, that perſons of high rank had mingled in the intrigues of ſeditious meetings, and had encouraged them by their countenance and protection. He would ſupport the adjournment, not for the purpoſe of examining into the truth of a particular alluſion, but in order to enquire into the actual ſtate of theſe ſeditious meetings, before they joined in the clamour againſt them, and to aſcertain the true ſituation of the public mind, before they countenanced ſuch a libel as the Bill implied upon the people of England.

MR. WILBERFORCE ſaid a few words in explanation.

GENERAL TARLETON and Mr. COURTENAY ſaid each a few words.

MR. SHERIDAN ſaid the queſtion came to this, that the worthy Alderman, by obſerving ſilence, had ſeemed to perſevere in his belief of the ſtory he had told. He was ſurpriſed that the Duke of Bedford ſhould be held out as countenancing any meetings which were deemed licentious, when he ſaw that reſpected name ſubſcribed publicly to a paper which would confer immortal honour on his character, and was intended to encourage an univerſal and decided oppoſition to the preſent Bill. It was indeed a ſtory which was fit for old wives to tell, and old wives to believe. He imagined the next would be that the orators at Copenhagen-houſe had borrowed bob wigs from the Duke of Norfolk in order to make their appearances. All ſuch idle tales, however, only proved the inceſſant

calumnies

calumnies to which the oppoſers of Miniſters were ſubject. A ſhocking inſtance of the malicious and wicked attempt which aroſe from the ſyſtem, which Miniſters patroniſed, happened during the State Trials laſt year. At the very time when the Bill was before the Grand Jury, in the caſe of thoſe men whom a certain Honourable Gentleman choſe to term "acquitted felons," a ſtory which could not fail to impreſs inſtantly the public mind, of a terrible deſign to murder the King, by means of ſome new kind of inſtrument, was propagated. This was generally believed at the time, yet no ſuch plot had been conceived, he believed, and this inſtrument no perſon had ever ſeen. For all this, prints, notoriouſly in miniſterial pay, had ſaid that the inſtrument was found, and the perſons fully committed for trial. Thus it was evident how Miniſters would avail themſelves of every incident which occurred, to render ſuſpicious men, whoſe influence and character might enable them to oppoſe their meaſures with ſucceſs.

Strangers being ordered to withdraw, a diviſion took place on Lord W. Ruſſell's motion for an amendment.

For the motion	-	-	-	32
Againſt it	-	-	-	145
Majority	-	-	-	113

The Bill was then read a firſt time.

Mr. Sheridan obſerved that he was happy to find that the Hon. Gentleman had abandoned part of his plan, ſince he had expunged that clauſe which related to private families. He was ſurpriſed, however, to find that meetings in fields, aſſembled without regard to the regulations of the Bill, were to be held as diſorderly houſes.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he did not intend that the Bill ſhould extend to private families.

Mr. M. Robinson aſked, ſince all meetings to which admittance was obtained by money or tickets were prohibited, whether card routs were comprehended within the operation of the Bill.

The Houſe then divided on the queſtion—That the Bill be read a ſecond time—

Ayes	-	-	-	129
Noes	-	-	-	21
Majority	-	-	-	108

A ſecond diviſion took place on the queſtion—That this Bill be read a ſecond time on Tueſday next,

Ayes	-	-	-	129
Noes	-	-	-	23
Majority	-	-	-	106

A BILL

FOR THE MORE EFFECTUALLY PREVENTING SEDITIOUS MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES.

WHEREAS aſſemblies of divers perſons, collected for the purpoſe or under the pretext of deliberating on public grievances, and of agreeing on petitions, complaints, remonſtrances, declarations, or other addreſſes, to the King, or to both Houſes, or either Houſe of Parliament, have of late been made uſe of to ſerve the ends of factious and ſeditious perſons, to the great danger of the public peace, and may become the means of producing confuſion and calamities in the nation.

Be it enacted by the King's Moſt Excellent Majeſty, by and with the advice and conſent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this preſent Parliament aſſembled, and by the authority of the ſame, That from and after the   no meeting, of any deſcription of perſons, exceeding the number of   perſons (other than and except any meeting of any county, riding, or diviſion, called by the lord lieutenant, cuſtos rotulorum, or ſheriff of ſuch county, or any meeting called by   or more juſtices of the peace of the county or place where ſuch meeting ſhall be holden, or any meeting of any corporate body) ſhall be holden for the purpoſe or on the pretext of conſidering of, or preparing any petition, complaint, remonſtrance, or declaration, or other addreſs to the King, or to both Houſes, or either Houſe of Parliament, for alteration of matters eſtabliſhed in Church and State, or for the purpoſe or on the pretext of deliberating upon any grievance in Church or State, unleſs notice of the intention to hold ſuch meeting, and of the time and place when and where the ſame ſhall be propoſed to be holden, and of the purpoſe for which the ſame ſhall be propoſed to be holden, and of the matter or matters to be propounded and deliberated upon in ſuch meeting, ſhall be given by public advertiſement in   days at leaſt before ſuch meeting ſhall be holden, and unleſs the authority to inſert ſuch notice ſhall be ſigned by   perſons at the leaſt being houſeholders reſident within the county, city, or place where ſuch meeting ſhall be propoſed to be holden, and unleſs ſuch authority, ſo ſigned, ſhall be written at the foot of a true copy of ſuch notice, and ſhall be delivered to the perſon required to inſert the ſame in any ſuch   as aforeſaid; which perſon ſhall cauſe ſuch notice and authority to be carefully preſerved, and ſhall produce the ſame whenever thereto required by any one or more juſtice or juſtices of the peace of the county, city, town, or place where ſuch perſon ſhall reſide, or where ſuch   ſhall be printed, and ſhall all, if required, cauſe a true copy of ſuch notice and authority, ſo ſigned, to be delivered to any ſuch juſtice who ſhall require the ſame.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, that all meetings of any deſcription of perſons exceeding the number of   perſons (other than and except as aforeſaid) which after the ſaid   ſhall be holden without ſuch previous notice as aforeſaid, for the purpoſe, or on the pretext of conſidering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonſtrance,

ſtrance, declaration, or other addreſs, to the King, or both Houſes, or either Houſe of Parliament for alteration of matters eſtabliſhed in Church or State, or for the purpoſe, or on the pretext of deliberating on any grievance in Church or State, ſhall be deemed and taken to be unlawful aſſemblies.

And be it enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That if any perſons, to the number of or more, being aſſembled contrary to the proviſions hereinbefore contained, at any time after the and being required or commanded by any one or more juſtice or juſtices of the peace, or by the ſheriff of the county, or his under ſheriff, or by the mayor or other head officer, or juſtice of the peace of any city or town corporate where ſuch aſſembly ſhall be, by proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form hereinafter directed, to diſperſe themſelves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful buſineſs, ſhall, to the number of or more, notwithſtanding ſuch proclamation made, remain or continue together by the ſpace of after ſuch command or requeſt made by proclamation, that then ſuch continuing together to the number of or more, after ſuch command and requeſt made by proclamation ſhall be adjudged and the offenders therein ſhall be adjudged

And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That the order and form of the proclamation to be made as aforeſaid ſhall be as hereafter followeth (that is to ſay) the juſtice of the peace, or other perſons authorized by this Act to make the ſaid proclamation, ſhall, among the ſaid perſons aſſembled, or as near to them as he can ſafely come, with a loud voice, command, or cauſe to be commanded, ſilence to be while proclamation is making, and after that ſhall openly and with loud voice make, or cauſe to be made, proclamation in theſe words, or like in effect:

"Our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all perſons being "aſſembled immediately to diſperſe themſelves, and peaceably to depart "to their habitations, or to their lawful buſineſs, upon the pains con-"tained in the Act, made in the thirty ſixth year of King George the "Third, for

"God ſave the KING."

And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That in caſe any meeting ſhall be holden, in purſuance of any ſuch notice as aforeſaid, and the purpoſe for which the ſame ſhall in ſuch notice have been declared to be holden, or any matter which ſhall be in ſuch notice propoſed to be propounded or deliberated upon at ſuch meeting, ſhall purport that any matter or thing by law eſtabliſhed may be altered otherwiſe than by the authority of King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament aſſembled, or ſhall tend to incite, or ſtir up the people to hatred or contempt of the perſon of his Majeſty, his heirs or ſucceſſors, or of the eſtabliſhed government and conſtitution of this realm; or in caſe any ſuch meeting ſhall be holden, and any of the perſons preſent at ſuch meeting ſhall proceed to propound, deliberate upon, or diſcuſs any propoſition for altering any thing by law eſtabliſhed, otherwiſe than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament aſſembled; or ſhall wilfully and adviſedly make any propoſition, or hold any diſcourſe, for the purpoſe of inciting and ſtirring up the people to hatred or contempt of the perſon of his Majeſty, his heirs or ſucceſſors, or the

the established government and constitution of this realm; or in case such meeting shall, by reason of any special circumstances, become dangerous to the public peace, in the judgment of two or more justices of the peace, or of the sheriff or his under sheriff, and one justice of the peace, of the county where such assembly shall be, or of the mayor or other head officer, and one justice of the peace of the city or town corporate where such assembly shall be, or of the mayor or other head officer of such city or town corporate, together with one justice of the peace of the county within which such city or town corporate shall be, or in case such city or town corporate shall be a county of itself, then with one justice of the peace of any adjoining county; it shall be lawful for such justices, sheriff, or under sheriff, mayor, or other head officer as aforesaid, as the case shall require, to declare such assembly an unlawful assembly, and thereupon it shall be lawful for one or more of such justices or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, by proclamation, to require or command the persons there assembled to disperse themselves; and if any persons, to the number of or more, being so required or commanded, by proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form hereinafter directed, to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, shall, to the number of or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain or continue together for the space of after such command or request made by proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of or more, after such command or request made by proclamation, shall be adjudged

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the order and form of the declaration, and proclamation to be made thereupon, as last aforesaid, shall be as hereafter follows (that is to say) one of the justices of the peace, or other persons authorized by this Act to make such declaration and proclamation, shall, among the said persons assembled, or as near to them as he can safely come, with a loud voice command, or cause to be commanded, silence to be while proclamation is making, and after that, shall openly and with loud voice make, or cause to be made the declaration of the justices or other persons authorized to make such declaration as aforesaid, also make, or cause to be made, proclamation thereupon as aforesaid; which declaration and proclamation shall be in these words, or like in effect:

"We two of his Majesty's justices of the peace for
" [or as the case may be] having adjudged this present assembly to be an unlawful assembly; do declare the same to be an unlawful assembly; and our Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled, immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, and to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the Act, made in the thirty-sixth year of King George the Third, for

"God save the KING."

Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if the justices, or other persons authorized to make such declaration as aforesaid, and proclamation thereupon, or any one of them, shall think fit to order any person or persons, who shall at such meeting proceed to propound, deliberate upon, or discuss any proposition for altering any thing by

law

law established, otherwise than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament assembled, or shall wilfully and advisedly make any proposition, or hold any discourse, for the purpose of inciting and stirring up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs, or successors, or the established government and constitution of this realm, to be taken into custody, to be dealt with according to law, it shall be lawful for the said justices, or persons so authorized as aforesaid, or any one of them, so to do, whether such declaration and proclamation as aforesaid shall be made or not; and in case the said justices, or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, or any of them, or any peace officer acting under their or any of their orders, shall be obstructed in taking into custody any person or persons so ordered to be taken into custody, then and in such case it shall be lawful for the said justices, or other persons so authorized as aforesaid, thereupon to make, or cause to be made, such declaration and proclamation as aforesaid, in manner aforesaid; and if any persons, to the number of or more, being required or commanded by such proclamation to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart as aforesaid, shall, to the number of or more, notwithstanding such proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of after such command or request made by proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of or more, after such command or request made by proclamation, shall be adjudged

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every justice and justices of the peace, sheriff, under sheriff, mayor, and other head officer aforesaid, is and are hereby authorized and impowered, on notice or knowledge of any such meeting or assembly as is herein beforementioned, to resort to the place where such meeting or assembly shall be, or shall be intended to be holden, and there to do, or order or cause to be done, all such acts, matters, and things, as the case may require, which they are hereby enabled to do, or order to be done; and it shall be lawful for all and every justices of the peace, sheriff, under sheriff, mayor, and other head officers as aforesaid, to take and require the assistance of any number of constables or other officers of the peace, within their respective districts, or within the district or place wherein every such meeting as hereinbefore mentioned shall be holden, which constables and other officers of the peace are hereby required to attend accordingly such justices, sheriff, under-sheriff, mayor, or other head officer respectively, and to give such assistance as shall be necessary, for the due execution of this act.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if such persons so assembled as aforesaid, or or more of them, after any proclamation made in manner aforesaid, shall continue together, and not disperse themselves within that then it shall and may be lawful to and for every justice of the peace, sheriff, or under sheriff of the county where such assembly shall be, and also to and for every high or petty constable, and other peace officer within such county, and also to and for every mayor, justice of the peace, sheriff, and other head officer, high or petty constable, and other peace officer of any city or town corporate where such assembly shall be, and to and for such other person and persons as shall be commanded to be assisting unto any such justice of the peace, sheriff or under sheriff, mayor, or other head officer aforesaid, who are hereby authorised and impowered to command all his Majesty's subjects of age and

and ability, to be affifting to them therein, to feize and apprehend, and they are hereby required to feize and apprehend fuch perfons fo affembled, and continuing together after proclamation made as aforefaid, and forthwith to carry the perfons fo apprehended before one or more of his Majefty's juftices of the peace of the county or place where fuch perfons fhall be fo apprehended, in order to their being proceeded againft for fuch offences according to law; and that if the perfons fo affembled, or any of them, fhall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt, in the difperfing, feizing, or apprehending, or endeavouring to difperfe, feize, or apprehend them, that then every fuch juftice of the peace, fheriff, under fheriff, mayor, head officer, high or petty conftable, or other peace officer, and all and fingular perfons, being aiding and affifting to them, or any of them, fhall be free, difcharged, and indemnified, as well againft the King's Majefty, his heirs and fucceffors, as againft all and every other perfon and perfons, of, for, or concerning the killing, maiming, or hurting of any fuch perfon or perfons fo affembled, that fhall happen to be fo killed, maimed, or hurt as aforefaid.

Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That if any perfon or perfons do or fhall, with force and arms, wilfully and knowingly oppofe, obftruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder, or hurt, any juftice of the peace, or other perfon authorized as aforefaid, who fhall attend any fuch meeting as aforefaid, or who fhall be going to attend any fuch meeting, or any perfon or perfons who fhall begin to proclaim, or go to proclaim, according to any proclamation hereby directed to be made, whereby fuch proclamation fhall not be made, that then every fuch oppofing, obftructing, letting, hindering, or hurting fuch juftices or other perfons fo authorized as aforefaid, and fo attending, or going to attend any fuch meeting, or any fuch perfon or perfons fo beginning or going to make any fuch proclamation as aforefaid, fhall be adjudged and the offenders therein fhall be adjudged and that alfo every fuch perfon or perfons fo being affembled as aforefaid, to the number of or more as aforefaid, to whom any fuch proclamation as aforefaid fhould or ought to have been made, if the fame had not been hindered as aforefaid, fhall likewife in cafe they, or any of them, to the number of or more, fhall continue together, and not difperfe themfelves within after fuch let or hindrance fo made, having knowledge of fuch let or hindrance fo made, fhall be adjudged and that alfo, if any perfon or perfons, fo being at any fuch affembly as aforefaid, fhall with force and arms wilfully and knowingly oppofe, obftruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder, or hurt any juftice of the peace, or other magiftrate, or any peace officer, in apprehending or taking into cuftody, in execution of any of the provifions of this act herein-before contained, any perfon or perfons, or endeavouring fo to do, that then every fuch oppofing, obftructing, letting, hindering, or hurting, fhall be adjudged and the offenders therein fhall be adjudged

And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That the fheriffs and their deputies, ftewards and their deputies, magiftrates of royal boroughs, and all other inferior judges and magiftrates, and alfo all high and petty conftables, or other peace officers of any county, ftewartry, city, or town, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, fhall have fuch and the fame powers and authorities, for putting this prefent act in execution within Scotland

Scotland, as the juſtices of the peace and other magiſtrates aforeſaid reſpectively have, by virtue of this act, within and for the other parts of this kingdom; and that all and every perſon and perſons who ſhall at any time be convicted of any of the offences afore-mentioned, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, ſhall for every ſuch offence incur and ſuffer the pain of

And whereas certain houſes, rooms, or places within the cities of London and Weſtminſter, and in the neighbourhood thereof, and in other places, have of late been frequently uſed for the purpoſe of delivering lectures and diſcourſes on and concerning ſuppoſed public grievances, and matters relating to the laws, conſtitution, and government and policy of theſe kingdoms, and treating and debating on and concerning the ſame; and under pretence thereof lectures and diſcourſes have been delivered, and debates held, tending to ſtir up hatred and contempt of his Majeſty's Royal Perſon, and the eſtabliſhed government and conſtitution of this realm: Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That from and after the

every houſe, room, field, or other place, which ſhall be opened or uſed for the purpoſe of delivering lectures or diſcourſes on any ſubject whatſoever, or for publicly debating on any ſubject whatſoever, whether ſuch houſe, room, field, or place, ſhall be opened or uſed for any ſuch purpoſe alone, or for any ſuch purpoſe, together with any other purpoſe, or under whatever pretence the ſame ſhall be opened or uſed, to which any perſon ſhall be admitted by the payment of money, or by tickets ſold for money, or in conſequence of his paying or giving, or having paid or given, or agreeing thereafter to pay or give, in any manner, any money or other thing, for or in reſpect of his admiſſion into ſuch houſe, room, field, or place, unleſs the opening or uſing of ſuch houſe, room, field or place, ſhall have been previouſly licenced in manner hereinafter mentioned, ſhall be deemed a diſorderly houſe or place, and the perſon by whom ſuch a houſe, room, field or place, ſhall be ſo opened or uſed ſhall forfeit the ſum of for every day or time that ſuch houſe, room, field or place, ſhall be opened or uſed as aforeſaid, to ſuch perſon as will ſue for the ſame, and be otherwiſe puniſhed as the law directs in caſes of diſorderly houſes; and every perſon managing or conducting the proceedings, or acting as moderator, preſident or chairman, at ſuch houſe, room, field or place, or therein debating, or delivering any diſcourſe or lecture, and alſo every perſon who ſhall pay, give, collect or receive, or agree to pay, give collect, or receive any money or other thing, for, or in reſpect of the admiſſion of any perſon into any ſuch houſe, room, field, or place, or ſhall deliver out, diſtribute, or receive any ſuch ticket or tickets as aforeſaid, ſhall for every ſuch offence forfeit the ſum of to ſuch perſon as will ſue for the ſame.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That any perſon who ſhall at any time hereafter appear, act, or behave him or herſelf as maſter or miſtreſs, or as the perſon having the command, government, or management, of any ſuch houſe, room, field, or place as aforeſaid, ſhall be deemed and taken to be a perſon by whom the ſame is opened or uſed as aforeſaid, and ſhall be liable to be ſued or proſecuted, and puniſhed as ſuch, notwithſtanding he or ſhe be not in fact the real owner or occupier thereof.

M 2 An

And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That it fhall be lawful for any juftice or juftices of the peace, or chief magiftrate refpectively, of any county, city, borough, or place, who fhall, by information upon oath, have reafon to fufpect that any houfe, room, field or place, or any parts or part thereof, are or is opened or ufed for the purpofe of delivering lectures or difcourfes, or for public debate, contrary to the provifions of this act, to go to fuch houfe, room, or place, and demand to be admitted therein; and in cafe fuch juftice or juftices, or other magiftrates, fhall be refufed admittance to fuch houfe, room, field, or place, or any part thereof, the fame fhall be deemed a diforderly houfe or place, within the intent and meaning of this act; and all and every the provifions hereinbefore contained refpecting any houfe, room, field, or place, hereinbefore declared to be a diforderly houfe or place, fhall be applied to fuch houfe, room, field, or place, where fuch admittance fhall have been refufed as aforefaid, and every perfon therein at the time of fuch refufal fhall forfeit the fum of to any perfon who fhall fue for the fame.

Provided neverthelefs, and be it enacted by the authority aforefaid, That nothing in this act contained refpecting any fuch houfe, room, field or place, which may be deemed a diforderly houfe or place within the intent and meaning of this act, fhall extend, or be conftrued to extend, to any houfe, room, or other building, which fhall have been previoufly licenfed, by writing under the hands and feals of or more juftices of the peace of the county, city, town or place, where fuch houfe, room, or other building fhall be, as a houfe, room or building to be opened or ufed for fuch purpofes as in the faid licence fhall be expreffed, whilft fuch licence fhall remain in force, and which licence it fhall be lawful for fuch juftices to grant, and the fame fhall be in force for the fpace of and no longer, or for any lefs fpace of time, therein to be fpecified; and which licence it fhall be lawful for the fame juftices, or any juftices of the fame county, city, town, or place, to revoke and declare void, and no longer in force, by any other writing under the hands and feals of a duplicate whereof fhall be delivered to or ferved upon the perfon to whom the faid licence fo revoked fhall have been granted, or fhall be left at the houfe, room, or building, for which fuch licence fhall have been granted.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That any perfon entitled to any of the forfeitures aforefaid may fue by action of debt in any of his Majefty's Courts of Record at Weftminfter, in which it fhall be fufficient to declare that the defendant is indebted to the plaintiff in the fum of (being the fum demanded by the faid action) being forfeited by an act, made in the thirty-fixth year of the reign of his Majefty King George the Third, intituled and the Plaintiff, if he fhall recover in any fuch action, fhall have his full cofts: Provided alfo, That if any action or fuit fhall be brought againft any perfon for any thing done in purfuance and in execution of this act, the defendant may plead the general iffue; and if a verdict pafs for the defendant, or the plaintiff difcontinue his or her action, or be nonfuited, or judgment be given againft the plaintiff, then fuch defendant fhall have cofts.

Provided alfo, That the ecclefiaftical jurifdiction within this realm fhall not by this act be altered or abridged, but that the ecclefiaftical courts may punifh the faid offences, as if this act had not been made.

Provided

Provided alſo, That nothing in this act contained ſhall be conſtrued to extend to take away or abridge any of the liberties or immunities to which the Proteſtant ſubjects of this kingdom are entitled by an act, made in the firſt year of King William and Queen Mary, intituled, "An Act for exempting their Majeſty's Proteſtant ſubjects, diſſenting from the church of England, from the penalties of certain laws," or to which Papiſts, or perſons profeſſing the Popiſh religion, are entitled by an act, made in the thirty-firſt year of his Majeſty reign, intituled, "An Act to relieve, upon conditions and under reſtrictions, the perſons therein deſcribed, from certain penalties and diſabilities to which Papiſts, or perſons profeſſing the Popiſh religion, are by law ſubject; or to extend to any lectures or diſcourſes to be delivered in any of the univerſities of theſe kingdoms, by any member thereof, or any perſon authorized by the chancellor, vice-chancellor, or other proper officers of ſuch univerſities reſpectively."

Provided always, That nothing in this act contained ſhall be deemed or taken to alter, abridge, or otherwiſe affect any proviſion already made by the law of this realm, or of any part thereof, for the ſuppreſſion or puniſhment of any offence whatſoever deſcribed in this act.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That this act ſhall be openly read at every quarter ſeſſions of the peace, and at every leet or law day.

Provided always, That no perſon ſhall be proſecuted by virtue of this act, unleſs ſuch proſecution ſhall be commenced within after the offence committed; and no action ſhall be brought, for any of the penalties by this act impoſed, unleſs the ſame ſhall be brought within calendar months next after the offence committed.

Provided alſo, That this act ſhall be and continue in force for from the and until the end of the then next ſeſſion of Parliament.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

Friday November 13.

The following loyal ADDRESS is now lying at the Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand, and the Star and Garter in Pall-Mall, for the Signatures of all ſuch Perſons as wiſh to expreſs their abhorrence of the late daring and highly-criminal Outrage committed on his Majeſty, in the way to his Parliament, on Thurſday, October 29, 1795.

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

WE your Majeſty's loyal and faithful ſubjects, inhabitants of the metropolis and parts adjacent, whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, approach your Majeſty, at this criſis, to expreſs our grief for the daring and highly criminal outrages that were lately committed, to the danger of your Majeſty's perſon, and to the interruption of your paſſage to your Parliament; to declare our abhorrence and deteſtation of ſuch diſloyal and ſeditious attempts upon your Majeſty's perſon and Government; and to declare our readineſs to ſacrifice every thing we poſſeſs for the protection of your Majeſty, in all the honours, reſpect, and reverence, as well as all the legal authority,

authority, belonging to your royal ſtate; being fully perſuaded, as we are, that nothing we poſſeſs, neither our liberty nor our property, can be ſafe, unleſs your Majeſty, the guardian of the laws, be in ſafety.

We cannot contemplate this unexampled inſult on your Majeſty without calling to our minds thoſe conſiderations that are ever before us, and make ſo ſignal a contraſt with this diſloyal outrage; the tenor of your Majeſty's Government, ſo uniformly mild in every part of its adminiſtration; the unbounded and univerſal demonſtrations of loyalty and affection among your ſubjects, never more manifeſt than at this moment; and, the national character of Britons, always averſe from acts ſo ferocious and ſo unmanly. In the midſt of ſuch evidences of general proſperity and content, what manner of men muſt thoſe infatuated few be, who have ſo degenerated from the manners of their countrymen? what can they promiſe themſelves? and by what motives can they be actuated?

We are unwilling to bring to your Majeſty mere expreſſions of condolence and of loyalty, at a time when our hearts are full of ſerious and alarming reflections, ariſing from the late nefarious outrage. We think it a duty we owe your Majeſty, and an obligation towards our fellow ſubjects, to take this occaſion to lay before your Majeſty our firm perſuaſion and belief as to the true cauſe of ſuch outrage and violence.

We beg humbly to ſubmit to your Majeſty, that the heat and intemperance, diſcovered by the offenders on that diſgraceful day, are to be aſcribed to a deſign that has long been at work, for corrupting and inflaming the minds of your Majeſty's ſubjects againſt the good laws and government of this kingdom. The manner in which this deſign is carried on, has been laid open in the Reports of your two Houſes of Parliament, during the laſt ſeſſion of Parliament, and in the trials of certain perſons for High Treaſon. We daily ſee with what activity and perſeverance this deſign is ſtill managed; the miſchievous actors are continually employed either in clubs, at political debates, at political lectures, or at meetings in the open air; in all of which your Majeſty's perſon and Government, and the eſtabliſhed laws, are openly traduced and ſcoffed at in the hearing of many hundreds of your Majeſty's ſubjects. In ſuch ſeminaries as theſe, mens' minds are prepared for open and violent attacks on all lawful authority; in ſuch meetings the profeſſors and miſſionaries of ſedition tutor and madden their ignorant and fanatical diſciples, whom they ſend forth to commit overt acts of miſchief.

The progreſs of this deſign for deſtroying firſt a good opinion of the Government, and afterwards the Government itſelf, has been viewed by your loyal and peaceable ſubjects with great concern and indignation; and they have been the more deeply impreſſed by a view of this growing evil, becauſe they ſee, by experience, that the law, either in the letter or in the application of it, is not adequate to prevent or ſuppreſs it; and that the contrivers of miſchief act in open defiance of magiſtracy. The conſequence is, that diſaffection increaſes, and the licentious deride the law that cannot curb them.

The diſgrace and danger attending ſuch want of efficacy in the laws have, as we believe, united the majority of your Majeſty's ſubjects in one general wiſh that the law were rendered more energetic. The Parliament has been uſed, on former occaſions, to reſtrain the exceſſes of the time with new laws adapted to the nature of them. If any public miſchief deſerved a remedy,

a remedy, and if any time required it, we ſubmit that the preſent does. Never was the foundation of Government and of ſociety itſelf ſo threatened; and at no time did the nation manifeſt itſelf ſo prepared to receive, and indeed ſo plainly call for, ſome regulations that would protect the good ſubject againſt the bad, and the proſperity of the whole againſt the machinations of a few.

Your Majeſty's ſubjects cannot but compare the advantages enjoyed by the profeſſors of ſedition above other public exhibitors. They obſerve, that the Parliament has anxiouſly provided reſtrictions upon places of innocent amuſement, where money is paid for admiſſion; theatres and places of that ſort are not permitted but by your Majeſty's royal patent, or by a licence from the magiſtrates; and every individual dramatic piece muſt previouſly be approved by the Lord Chamberlain of your Majeſty's houſehold.

In theſe inſtances the Legiſlature wiſely ſhewed their concern for the morals and principles of the people, and as wiſely provided a regulation, not merely of puniſhment, but of prevention. But the teachers of ſedition open a debating ſociety or a lecture wherever they pleaſe, and promulge what doctrines they think fit, and they have completed their miſchief before puniſhment can overtake them, if it ever does; and although the word of God cannot be preached in any other than the eſtabliſhed churches without a previous licence from the magiſtrate, yet peſtilent doctrines, deſtructive of all government and ſocial order, are inculcated every evening to crowds, without interruption or penalty!

We cannot but reflect on theſe compariſons, and expreſs our deep regret, that the promulgation of dangerous opinions reſpecting your Majeſty's perſon and Government, and the eſtabliſhed laws, ſhould enjoy ſuch impunity. Whether this ariſes from a lenity in the adminiſtration of the laws, or the law needs amendment, we do not preſume to ſay; but we humbly lay theſe our ſerious apprehenſions before your Majeſty, truſting to your Majeſty's wiſdom for the remedy, whether it may be by a more vigorous execution of the preſent laws, or by recommending to your Parliament to provide ſuch others as to their wiſdom ſhall ſeem proper.

In thus praying your Majeſty to interpoſe for the ſuppreſſion of a growing miſchief, by ſome new meaſure, either of exertion or regulation, we hope we are juſtified, becauſe we believe it is neceſſary not only for your Majeſty's loyal and peaceable ſubjects, to protect them and their families againſt the deſigns of the diſaffected; but alſo for the miſled and infatuated, to protect them againſt the inſinuating arts of their leaders in ſedition; and becauſe we believe, that till the doors of theſe conventicles for ſedition are ſhut, there will be no peace in the land. We feel confidence in this our humble prayer, when we conſider that your Majeſty is ſent for the puniſhment of evil-doers, as well as for the praiſe of them that do well.

We feel ourſelves wholly free from cenſure, in imploring your Majeſty to uſe your authority againſt our fellow ſubjects, when we reflect, that the utmoſt we wiſh is, ſome preventive regulation, that may prevent the evil-diſpoſed againſt himſelf, by taking away the opportunity of offending.

We are, may it pleaſe your Majeſty, with moſt inviolable attachment,

Your Majeſty's moſt loyal, moſt dutiful, and obedient Subjects.

November 5, 1795.

November 13, 1795.

PUBLIC OFFICE, BOW-STREET.

Before N. BOND, Esq.

HIGH TREASON.

EDWARD Collins, who ſtands charged on the oath of W. Palin, with throwing a ſtone at his Majeſty's carriage on the 29th of October laſt, as it was returning to St. James's with his Majeſty in it, underwent a final examination; and the opinion of Mr. Serjeant Adair having been taken on the caſe, which was, that it amounted to high treaſon, the priſoner was fully committed for trial, and the parties bound over to proſecute at the next ſeſſions at the Old Bailey.

Previous to the priſoner's quitting the room, Mr. Bond aſked him if he would wiſh to ſay any thing in his defence; at the ſame time adviſing him to defer what he had to urge till he came to trial.

The priſoner replied, that he had nothing more to ſay, than that he was entirely innocent of the charge, either in thought or deed, having always had the higheſt reſpect both for his Majeſty's perſon and the laws of his country, and which he made no doubt of fully eſtabliſhing on his trial.

Kidd Wake, who ſtands charged on oath with hiſſing and hooting his Majeſty, and otherwiſe behaving in a riotous manner, as his Majeſty was going to and returning from the Parliament-Houſe on the 29th of October, was fully committed for trial for a miſdemeanour, in being guilty of the above offences, and on which caſe Mr. Adair's opinion had alſo been taken, with this advice to the Magiſtrate, that he ſhould leave the bailing of the matter to a Judge.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE.

THE following Article (from the Morning Chronicle, Nov 13,) is reprinted here, as the tranſaction was alluded to afterwards in Parliament, in a manner not wholly unconnected with the ſubject of theſe documents.

" The people are not ignorant that to Mr. Burke we are indebted for the preſent war, and for all the apoſtacies from political principle, which more than the meetings at Copenhagen-Houſe, and more than the doctrines of Jacobiniſm, have contributed " to incite or ſtir up the people to hatred or diſlike," not of the perſon of the good and greatly abuſed King, but of the corrupt adminiſtration of the country.

Now Mr. Burke has reaped the wages of his political virtues. His career is cloſed. His books are ſhut, and he has, in the mercantile phraſe, wound up his bottom. His life, as it has been very memorable, will no doubt be held out as an example; and it is fit that the world ſhould know what the profeſſion of principle is worth to an adept ſcholar.

When Mr. Burke firſt croſſed over the Houſe of Commons, from the Oppoſition to the Miniſtry, he received a penſion of 1200l. a year charged on the King's privy purſe!

When he had completed his labours, it was then a queſtion what recompence his ſervices deſerved. Mr. Burke wanting a preſent ſupply of money, it was thought that a penſion of 2000l. per annum for forty years certain,

certain, would sell for eighteen years purchase, and bring him of course 36,000l. But this pension must, by the very unfortunate act, of which Mr. Burke himself was the author, have come before Parliament. Instead of this Mr. Pitt suggested the idea of a pension of 2000l. a year for three lives, to be charged on the King's revenue of West India four and an half per cents. This was tried at the market, but it was found that it would not produce the 36,000l. which were wanted. In consequence of this a pension of 2,500l. per annum, for three lives on the four and an half West India Fund, the lives to be nominated by Mr. Burke, that he may accommodate the purchasers, is finally granted to this disinterested patriot!

We have mentioned this trifling fact, at this moment, to serve as an argument for the Bills now passing in Parliament. It will be obvious that while such use is made of the public money, it is essential that the people should be deprived of the use of speech; for if these things be true, human nature is too irritable to be silent. If the fact be not literally as we have stated it, we shall be happy to give a new copy of the account with errors corrected."

We say that he has retired from the trade of politics, with pensions to the amount of 3,700l. a year. Is it to be wondered at, that Ministers should be desirous to stop the mouths of the people, when such jobs as this are to be practised?"

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, NOV. 13.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE rose, and said, that it was of the utmost importance that the people of this country should know distinctly the grounds upon which a Bill, which so nearly affected their liberties as that now pending in the House, proceeded; and he was extremely anxious that every circumstance that could in any degree seem to support so extraordinary a measure, and justify their Lordships in passing it, should be obtained. He had heard as almost the only reason assigned in its defence, that the outrage offered to his Majesty, and the proceedings of a certain Society, were connected; but, to his mind, no vestige of such a connection had appeared, or had been attempted to be established.—If any proof of this had been derived by Ministers, from the investigations which they conducted upon the subject, he wished it to be communicated to the House for their information, and as an excuse for their adoption of the Bill. He would therefore move,

"That there be laid before this House a copy of the examination taken by, or by order of his Majesty's Secretary of State, or before his Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, on the

sub-

ſubject of the attack made on his Majeſty's perſon on the firſt day of this preſent Seſſion of Parliament."

Lord Grenville ſaid, that a very few words would ſuffice to ſhew the impropriety of the motion made by the noble Lord. Great unanimity of ſentiment had been diſcovered, relative to the flagitious nature of the outrage, and in the deſire expreſſed that the offenders ſhould be brought to puniſhment. In the courſe of the enquiry which had been inſtituted, it was poſſible that Miniſters might yet be ſo fortunate as to diſcover ſome traces which might lead to a detection of the mode in which the violence had been committed, and even to that of the criminals. It would therefore be highly improper to publiſh ſuch evidence as might warn the culprits of their danger, and enable them to eſcape from the puniſhment due to their guilt.

The Earl of Lauderdale ſaid, that if the noble Secretary meant ſeriouſly to inform the Houſe that an inveſtigation was now going on, from which a detection of the offenders might reſult, and which might be diſconcerted by making the progreſs of the enquiry public, he would conſent to wave his motion.

Lord Grenville complained, that it was contrary to the uſage of Parliament to make words uttered by any noble Lord the ground of making a motion or withdrawing it. He ſaid, that the Addreſs preſented to his Majeſty by the Houſe had recommended every ſtep by which the offenders might be diſcovered, and his Majeſty's anſwer had ſtated a determination to adopt ſuch meaſures. Upon this ground the noble Lord might withdraw his motion, but he would give no ſuch anſwer to any queries on the ſubject, as might be thought to induce the noble Lord to do ſo.

The Earl of Lauderdale ſaid, that the noble Secretary of State now claimed the privilege of ſaying what he thought proper, without giving ground for noble Lords to make handle of it, though he, on a former occaſion, had been extremely forward to faſten upon expreſſions of others, and to ſtate what would have been the conſequences out of that Houſe. The evidence given at the bar was by no means ſufficient to aſcertain whether the outrage ſo much deprecated aroſe from a regular plot, or an incidental tumult, and the public was perfectly convinced that nothing ſatisfactory had been obtained from it. The witneſſes completely contradicted each other on many points, and the only fact on which they all agreed was, that the ſtone by which the window of his Majeſty's carriage was broken did not iſſue from the houſe out of which it was ſaid to have come. There was nothing like any evidence of regular conſpiracy—nothing which could authoriſe the

Houſe

Houſe to proceed on ſuch an idea. From the conduct of his Majeſty's Miniſters, he was thoroughly convinced, that the pretence of the advances made in the inveſtigation was a downright impoſture, and that they had not diſcovered any thing which could tend to connect that outrage with the proceedings of any body of men, or to corroborate the aſſertions they had made on the ſubject.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR ſtated, that it would be a criminal breach of truſt, and a very high miſdemeanor in any magiſtrate, and in the Secretary of State, as well as every other magiſtrate, to divulge, without an order of the Houſe, the reſult of an examination which might form the baſis of a proſecution in a court of juſtice, and he thought the motion highly improper.

After ſome further converſation, in which Earl Mansfield joined, the motion was withdrawn, but not till the Earl of Lauderdale had again expreſſed his conviction, that on the part of Miniſters a pretence of diſcoveries was held out to deceive the Houſe, and for which no foundation exiſted.

The Bill for the better ſecurity of his Majeſty's Perſon, &c. being read a third time,

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE roſe and ſaid, he had formerly hinted his intention, if the Bill ſhould paſs, of moving a clauſe to extend it to Scotland. It was indeed meant, no doubt, to apply ſo far to that country; but unleſs ſome proviſion were enacted to reſtrict proſecutions for the offences of ſedition and miſdemeanor, to be conducted on this Bill, an indictment at common law might deprive the people wholly of the benefit of it. He thought that very few words would be neceſſary to ſhew the propriety of the Houſe adopting the clauſe he meant to introduce. It was confeſſed that whatever diſcontents or tendency to ſedition exiſted in England, there was none in the country to which he alluded. If the Bill about to be paſſed was adequate to ſuppreſs ſedition in a country where a diſpoſition to overturn the laws was ſaid to have appeared, it would ſurely be ſufficient where a very oppoſite ſpirit prevailed. He could not think it poſſible that ſtronger penalties were neceſſary to repreſs ſedition in a Scotchman than an Engliſhman. He would therefore propoſe that there be added the following clauſe:

"Provided alſo and be it enacted, that this Act ſhall extend to that part of Great Britain called Scotland, and that no proſecution ſhall be there inſtituted by indictment at common law, or otherwiſe for any offence within the proviſions of this Act, otherwiſe than under this Act."

EARL

Earl Mansfield said, he would spare the House the trouble of again hearing the arguments he had employed when a motion formerly was made to alter the laws of Scotland on the subject. Some there were whose eloquence could give the charms of novelty to the most common topics—*decies repetita placebit.* But such qualifications were the portion only of the favoured few, and he would not detain their Lordships with a repetition of what he had then urged. Yet he was not afraid to meet any noble Lord upon that discussion. He had the happiness to know that the decision of the judges of the Court of Justiciary met with the approbation of every professional man of ability and credit in the country, with the single exception of the noble Earl, who, he well knew, had studied the law of Scotland, and, if other avocations had not engaged his attention, he would doubtless have proved one of its brightest ornaments. The people of Scotland had long enjoyed the laws which now existed, and those laws were suited to their disposition and inclination. The laws of England and Scotland were, by the Treaty of Union, to be maintained perfectly distinct, on one point alone, viz. the laws of treason, had they been wisely made to agree. With regard to misdemeanors, the laws were totally different. In Scotland, by the law of the land, the punishment was in the power of the judges, or arbitrary, a term which might sound ill in the ears of their Lordships, but which was nothing more than another word for discretion. In England, similar crimes were punished in a different manner, yet that was no reason to interfere with the system of criminal justice which had long prevailed in Scotland, and under which they had lived happy and contented. In the present moment it was utterly impossible for the House to comply with the motion of the noble Earl, which had not been brought forward in a regular manner, and surely it would be an act of supererogation to proceed to alter the penal law of Scotland in an essential point, without a single petition from the country upon the table, to call their attention to the subject, without any complaint that the existing law was a grievance, or any wish expressed by the people of Scotland that it should be changed. It was proposed only *obiter*, and appended as a rider to a Bill. The reasons urged in favour of it by the noble Lord were rather extraordinary, He stated that the people of Scotland were perfectly quiet; and in the very same breath that he represents them as living contentedly under their present laws, he moved for an alteration.

The Earl of Lauderdale said, that when his Majesty's Ministers had resorted to the present Bill, as necessary to repress

the ſpirit of diſcontent, which they repreſented as too ſtrong to be kept in awe by any other than the moſt powerful remedies, he could not account for their refuſal to extend it to Scotland, and their obſtinate defence of the ſyſtem of criminal law prevalent in that country, unleſs by aſcribing their predilection for the latter to motives which boded little good to the liberties of England. There were men who were not averſe to the adoption of the Scotch juriſprudence, and he was afraid that the preſent Bill was a ſtep to the realizing of the deſign. It was perhaps only a trial how the people of England would ſubmit to the approaches to the ſyſtem, and their acquieſcence would lead, at ſome period not very diſtant, to its complete adoption. He contended that not himſelf only, but many diſtinguiſhed lawyers in Scotland, had been of opinion that the law, as ſtated by the noble Earl (Mansfield), ſo far from being underſtood to be the law of the country, that idea had never entered into the head of any man till the conviction of certain perſons, which had produced the diſcuſſion referred to by the noble Lord.

The Earl of Mansfield ſaid, he diſdained the imputation thrown on Miniſters, and repeated his former arguments.

Lord Hawkesbury followed on the ſame ground.

The Earl of Hopetoun ſtated the perfect attachment which the people of Scotland entertained for their laws, and the ſatisfaction they felt in being ſo well ſecured in their lives and properties, their deteſtation of political miſſionaries, and his apprehenſion that any alteration in the laws might expoſe the people to be miſled by the artifices of deſigning men.

The motion of the Earl of Lauderdale was then negatived without a diviſion.

The Duke of Bedford ſaid, after the very ample diſcuſſion the Bill before the Houſe had undergone, during its progreſs to its preſent ſtage, he was ſenſible of the little proſpect left him of gaining the attention of their Lordſhips, by novelty of argument or force of reaſoning. It certainly was not his wiſh or deſign to occupy their Lordſhip's time, by going over the grounds of objection that had already been taken to the Bill. He felt, however, ſo great a depreſſion of ſpirits, and found himſelf ſo overwhelmed with anxiety of mind, when he contemplated the meaſure in queſtion, that he confeſſed, he was impelled by thoſe ſenſations to oppoſe the Bill through every ſtage of it, and would endeavour, by one more effort, one further ſtruggle, to impreſs their Lordſhips with the ſentiments he entertained on the ſubject. The firm and decided conduct of an oppoſition, feeble, in point of number, had

indeed effected fome change in the claufes of the Bill, yet, while the principle was admitted, he had no confolation but in having exerted himfelf to foften the evil which he could not prevent.

I conceive, faid his Grace, this meafure to be, not merely an extenfion of the criminal law, an extenfion of the general law, but a ftab to the conftitution, and an attempt to ftrike at the foundation of the liberties of Englifhmen. I fhall therefore fhortly advert to the reafons by which this meafure is fupported, and the arguments by which thefe reafons are enforced. I ought to fay reafon, for one only has been affigned, namely, the outrage againft his Majefty, on the firft day of the Seffion. This outrage we all equally lament: the fentiments of regret, and abhorrence which we felt on the occafion, we have ftated in our Addrefs to his Majefty, and requefted him to take all poffible means to difcover and punifh the authors. How then can this Bill operate with refpect to that outrage? It is ftated that its object is to render the perfon of his Majefty more fecure. No doubt we would all chearfully concur in any meafure, which might tend to the greater fecurity of his Majefty's perfon. How can the perfon of his Majefty be rendered more fecure? Does it not already poffefs all the guard which it can derive from the reverence of office, and the enactments of law? Noble Lords are aware of the futility of the pretext, even while they fet it up, and that greater fecurity cannot be given to his Majefty's perfon by any new law than it already poffeffes from the eftablifhed conftitution. An attempt has been made to connect the outrage againft his Majefty with the proceedings of certain meetings, whofe feditious doctrines are faid to have been delivered, alienating from his Majefty the affections of his fubjects, and exciting their minds to contempt and hatred of the conftitution. To this I have only to anfwer, that, however publick and notorious the meetings that had taken place, to the proceedings of thofe meetings we cannot legiflatively refer; they are not before us in any parliamentary fh pe, or in any other upon which we can act. I may be told that the notoriety of thefe proceedings, and the frequent advertifements which we fee in the papers calling them together, are fufficient grounds upon which we may go on the prefent occafion. The affertion which had been made by certain noble Lords, that the late brutal and moft abominable attack on his Majefty's facred perfon proceeded from perfons connected with any political party exifting in the country, was fuch as ought to be immediately repelled; it was an affertion utterly unfupported by the leaft fhadow of evidence, and totally unfounded in fact. It has not been proved, either that their proceedings were of the na-

ture which has been defcribed; much lefs has it been made out that there exifted any connection between thofe proceedings and the outrage againft his Majefty, or that the perfons who attended thefe meetings were concerned in committing that outrage. It is an argument which refts merely upon affertion; and it were, furely, too much to proceed on fo flight a prefumption, in a meafure of fuch ferious confequences, which goes to create new crimes, and to introduce new laws, contrary to the fpirit of the conftitution, and fubverfive of the rights of the fubject. But not only is there this abfence of proof, which fhould preclude us from taking any fteps on the fubject; in the conduct of Minifters there are pofitive circumftances which give room for fufpicion that they do not believe their own affertion. If the proceedings of thofe meetings were of that notoriety which has been defcribed; if their tendency went to thofe objects which has been imputed to them; if the tenor of their difcourfes was calculated to alienate the affections of thofe prefent from his Majefty, and incite their minds to diflike and hatred of the conftitution; are there not laws already exifting to reprefs thofe meetings, and to punifh the authors of thofe difcourfes? Do not Minifters themfelves know that there are fuch laws in exiftence? I muft therefore contend, that Minifters were guilty of a moft fhameful breach of their duty, if they neglected to enforce thofe laws, and allowed the meetings to go on, while they were aware of their dangerous tendency. Ought they not rather to have repreffed their progrefs by thofe means which the Conftitution has put into their hands, than now, by a new law, to feek to take away the lives of thofe, whom by their neglect, they fuffered to advance to that pitch of criminality, which they now contend renders an alteration of the Conftitution neceffary. I have therefore a right to infer, either that Minifters were guilty of a moft fcandalous breach of duty, or that they do not believe their own affertion, when they impute to the meetings the feditious proceedings, and the dangerous tendency, which they have made the pretext for the prefent meafure. Such then being the only reafon which has been urged in fupport of this Bill, it remains with your Lordfhips to decide whether it is of that weight and authority, which ought to influence you to fanction the paffing of a new law, fo ferious in its nature, and fo alarming in its probable confequences. Could Minifters, the Duke afked, with truth complain that the remedies to the evils, which they deprecate, and the power of fuppreffing thofe illegal principles, fo dangerous to the Sovereign and the Conftitution, are not in their hands? It was not that they had not authority to exercife, or that the laws fur-

nifhed

niſhed no weapons to deſtroy the machinations of ſedition. Miniſters wiſhed to ſtretch the law beyond its tone. Had they done their duty they would have employed the juſt authority of the laws in puniſhing and ſuppreſſing ſedition, inſtead of ſeeking to convict the authors of treaſonable crimes. It was a miſtaken—it was a fatal idea that the ſeverity of the law was the beſt protection of a Government. It was common for noble Lords to go to France for their examples, nor would he there decline to meet them. He would confeſs that the French Revolution was the moſt ſanguinary and moſt calamitous which the hiſtory of mankind ever exhibited: but he would tell their Lordſhips how this diſaſtrous Revolution was produced, and he would defy any one who heard him to deny the cauſes he aſſigned. It was not effected by the harangues of field preachers, or the diſcuſſions of political clubs [a cry of *hear! hear!*]. Yes, ſaid his Grace, I repeat, that it was not by the operations of ſuch petty and unequal cauſes that ſo mighty an event was occaſioned; it was by the profligate manners of a licentious court, which ſanctioned by its example, and extended by its influence, a contempt of morals and of decency; a corrupt and unprincipled ſucceſſion of Miniſters, who involved the nation in an unjuſt and an unneceſſary war—who ſquandered the reſources, and irretrievably ruined the finances of a flouriſhing nation—who ſtretched the ſeverity of the law beyond the ſuffrance of human nature! It was by theſe cauſes that the old Government of France forfeited the attachment and ſupport of the people.

In this country, the perſonal virtues of the Monarch conſtitute a marked difference; the amiable character of the King may baniſh the licentious immorality of a French Court. In the conſtitution of the Cabinet, and the meaſures of corrupt and wicked Miniſters, (for corrupt he was warranted to call them, in conſequence of their profuſe and laviſh grants of the publick money) will be found the conduct that contributed to the fall of the French Monarchy: a war undertaken, and obſtinately proſecuted, without regard to the intereſt or to the wiſhes of the people of this country; new places created, and rewards beſtowed upon the partizans of their corrupt ſyſtem; and penſions of almoſt unparalleled profuſion laviſhed upon the avowed advocates of œconomy; nay, upon the very man who diſtinguiſhed himſelf at one time as the advocate of rigid œconomy, but whoſe conduct and whoſe writings had in an eminent degree contributed to create and continue the war, and to cauſe all its conſequent enormous expences. Though happily the finances of this nation have not yet reached that pitch of confuſion which haſtened the deſtruction of the French Government, how

long

long can that ſyſtem of prodigality be maintained; or how will a ſimilar cataſtrophe be avoided? And will ſevere meaſures or daring encroachments upon the liberties of the people prevent their diſſatisfaction? Gracious God in Heaven! exclaimed the Duke, that any ſet of men could think ſuch meaſures could enliven the hopes, or cheer the deſpair of a ſtarving people. Such attempts may ſilence the voice of complaint, but they cannot reach the mind that will brood over the injuſtice; they may reſtrain and fetter the actions of men, but cannot make them love the Conſtitution, or reconcile them to the Government. The ſmalleſt knowledge of the human heart muſt convince Miniſters of the danger and the folly of their deſigns.

Before he concluded, the Duke ſaid, he muſt once more ſay, that if the laws already in exiſtence were adequate to the puniſhment of ſedition, and the ſuppreſſion of illegal meetings, Miniſters were highly culpable if they did not employ the means furniſhed by the Conſtitution to its protection, and could not plead neceſſity for the introduction and for the enactment of a law which would inevitably overthrow the deareſt privileges of the people of England.

Lord Grenville ſaid, in anſwer, that he ſhould always be ready to defend any meaſure that he ſhould have the honour to bring forward, from the attacks that might be made on it. The noble Duke had ſet out with deſpairing of advancing much new argument againſt the Bill, and he certainly had urged little or none. He had relied chiefly on denying that he had any parliamentary knowledge of the proceedings of certain ſocieties, and had aſked if their Lordſhips knew any thing of them in their character of legiſlators? To this he muſt anſwer again, that the matter was too notorious to be doubted, and inſtead of making a queſtion of that, he would aſk another. Could any man exiſt in this metropolis who did not know it? Was the ſubject brought before their Lordſhips now for the firſt time? It had been before them long, and debated over and over again; they had on their table a voluminous body of evidence not attempted to be denied or refuted. Had noble Lords really forgotten the reports of a Committee of their Lordſhips, and the reſolution the Houſe had come to in conſequence. Parties were afterwards proſecuted; and yet the proceedings of the London Correſponding Society were carried on with increaſed eagerneſs and boldneſs. No longer ago than the preceding day there had been a proof of this. Theſe proceedings were inconſiſtent with the public tranquillity; and he was perſuaded their Lordſhips would agree with him they ought to be ſuppreſſed. Then came the queſtion, whether the exiſting law was adequate to the prevention of

ſuch proceedings? The noble Duke had, indeed, nearly anſwered his own argument upon the point, when he had ſaid they ought to be left to the power of the law, as it now ſtands, if the law was ſufficient for that purpoſe. To which he would anſwer, that the preſent law was notoriouſly, and even ridiculouſly, inſufficient: it was upon that ground the preſent Bill was founded; and upon that conviction that their Lordſhips had hitherto entertained this Bill. The noble Duke had aſked what proof was there of the connection between the proceedings at the meetings alluded to and the outrage which was offered to his Majeſty? The anſwer was, the dangerous doctrines held forth at ſuch meetings tended to irritate and inflame the minds of the ignorant and infatuated multitude, and to excite in them a diſlike of every form of government, and the concluſion was obvious; to that circumſtance was to be imputed all the miſchief that had ariſen, and the greater miſchiefs that were to be dreaded, if means were not taken for their timely prevention. Would any man undertake to prove that they were not connected? He believed nobody would undertake the taſk. The diſſeminating ſuch principles muſt be injurious to the public intereſt, and therefore the Bill before their Lordſhips provided for the ſafety of the Monarchy, which was eſſential to the ſafety of our conſtitution. It creates not any crimes, nor did it conſtitute any new treaſons, it only altered the puniſhment applied to both under the exiſting laws. In fact, the Bill was calculated not only as a means of preſerving the Sovereign, not merely from outrage and attack as brutal and ſcandalous as that lately attempted, but from an attack more ſucceſsful and infinitely more lamentable, more horrid and more fatal in its conſequences to the country. The noble Duke had alluded to the French revolution, and had thought proper to compare the meaſures purſued in France by the old Court, and thoſe of the Adminiſtration of which he had the honour to be a member. He had ſtated that the cauſe of that revolution in France aroſe not out of clubs and public meetings, but from a form of government in itſelf bad, the eſſence of it being deſpotic, and from the bad and heedleſs waſte of the finances of the country by a profligate adminiſtration. That the French revolution was owing to a government in itſelf bad he was ready to admit. He would admit alſo, that not only the diſſolute manners and imprudent conduct of the Court, but the waſteful expenditure of the public money, and groſs inattention to public finance, were undoubtedly the chief cauſes of that revolution; a revolution ſo far from being deprecated by the Government of this country, was regarded by them in a favourable point of view, as it afforded a

proſpect

prospect of encreasing the felicity of a great nation, and of contributing to the continuance of the tranquillity which then subsisted throughout Europe. So far it was a revolution that every good man must approve; he had long wished it a happy termination; and happy would it have been had it proceeded on the principle with which it set out. But what brought on all the plunders, assassinations, blood, and horror which afterwards desolated France, was the system of principles maintained by clubs and various public meetings which took place. It was that system, their seditious practices, and the ferocious conduct of successive political factions which ruined the country, and disturbed and agitated all Europe. Political assemblies, it was well known, had been held in England which openly professed to imitate the clubs in France. Their publications, their doctrines, and the principles they avowed were similar, and similar consequences were to be apprehended and guarded against; if they were suffered to continue scattering firebrands where there was much combustible matter, their Lordships and his Majesty's Ministers would have to answer to themselves and to their country for the effects that might follow. These clubs and societies proceeded on the Rights of Man, as they were called; rights, which, as they explained them, were incompatible with the existence of law, order, religion, or morality. The best rights that man could enjoy in a state of society were, protection to property, to person, and to that liberty which could be enjoyed with security only under a government regulated by law.

The Duke of Bedford rose to explain. When he had called for proof of the connection between the meetings of the political societies, and the perpetrators of the outrage committed on his Majesty, he did not require that sort of evidence which would be necessary to convict the Corresponding Society; but he thought that in so grave a proceeding, their Lordships ought to have had some better authority than bare presumption, or unsupported assertions. Some evidence ought at least to have been given, that sedition was disseminated at those meetings. The noble Lord had referred to evidence which had been two years since laid before their Lordships. If the facts upon which the Bill was grounded equally existed at the time, why was not a similar proceeding then adopted? The noble Lord said, that the Bill did not create new treasons or new crimes, it only went to punish with death crimes, which, by the existing laws, were liable to severe penalties. Surely these penalties might have been sufficient, if they had been properly enforced, to have checked the progress of these crimes, and prevented the necessity of new punishments. If these penalties had not been enforced, the blame lay with Ministers, and their former negli-

gence was now made the ground of their ſanguinary policy, which led them to introduce a ſyſtem of terror into this heretofore free country.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE felt himſelf called upon to trouble their Lordſhips in conſequence of what had fallen from the noble Secretary of State, who had not, in his opinion, by any means anſwered the objections of his friend the noble Duke. He had been contented with aſſerting, according to the cuſtom of Miniſters, that the evil of public and ſeditious meetings did exiſt, and that they were incompatible with the ſafety of our Government. Of this he had given no proof whatever, but had referred to the proof that was given of a plot on a former occaſion; of which plot alſo there had been no real proof—for the perſons who had been accuſed under it and tried at the Old Bailey, had not one of them been found guilty. The noble Secretary of State had complained that the doctrines held and the publications circulated by theſe meetings neceſſarily led to endanger the King's life, and therefore the Bill had been brought in to check the progreſs of ſuch proceedings, and the better to ſecure his Majeſty's perſon. It was thus Miniſters had always acted. They always alledged danger to the State, as a pretext for extending their own power, inſtead of uſing the power which they already had with vigour and with energy. He was willing to admit that diſcontent among the people did exiſt in a conſiderable degree, but he muſt contend that it did not ariſe from the cauſe which the noble Secretary of State alledged. It was not from diſloyalty or diſlike of the perſon of his Majeſty that theſe complaints came, on the contrary, he was beloved by his ſubjects. It was from the conduct of his Majeſty's adviſers; and under that view of the ſubject, he would ſay, it would be ſtrange indeed if the people did not complain. He would go further; he would ſay they ought to meet, and energetically oppoſe this Bill; and he had no doubt it was under that idea that they met the preceding day in a manner that had given ſo much offence to the noble Secretary of State. God forbid that the Bill before their Lordſhips ſhould ever paſs into a law, the people, he was ſatisfied, would abhor it, the more eſpecially as they underſtood from the noble Secretary of State himſelf, that this Bill was only one of a ſuite of Meaſures, which Miniſters had in contemplation. It was intended only to feel the pulſe of the people, a mere experiment to try their temper, and to learn whether they are prepared to ſubmit to deſpotiſm. In that view the people ſaid, and under that impreſſion they would deteſt it; from the ſample which the noble Secretary had offered, he believed he might ſave himſelf, and his colleagues, the trouble of bringing any more of the ſame ſort of goods to market.

It

It was curious and amufing to hear the noble Secretary declare, that the great object of the Bill was, a further fecurity for his Majefty's perfon. In order to ftrengthen their own hands and fet controul at defiance, Minifters had made ufe of the infamous and favage attack on his Majefty, to introduce Bills which went to deftroy the liberties of the fubject, by annihilating the principles of the conftitution. With regard to the perfonal fafety of his Majefty, they had been as torpid and as regardlefs in the hour of danger, as they had fhewn themfelves on every other important occafion. Apprized as they confeffed they had been of the infult offered to his Majefty in his way to the Houfe, to fulfil one of the moft important functions of the royal authority, how had Minifters conducted themfelves? They had fuffered him to return without additional guards, or any precaution whatever to prevent a repetition of the infult, and by fuch impotent and negligent conduct, they had expofed his Majefty to ftill greater danger than he had before experienced. Had he had the honour of attending his Majefty on that day, a dagger fhould have pierced his breaft, before any ruffian fhould have reached the perfon of his Sovereign. This he mentioned to fhew the little care which Minifters had manifefted for the King's perfon; a plea which they now made ufe of for offering the prefent Bill to their Lordfhips. Their real one was as he had already ftated, to encreafe their own power, and to conceal, if poffible, the fhame and confufion which they had brought upon themfelves, by the madnefs with which they had profecuted the war. They knew that unlefs they could prevent the people from meeting and uttering their complaints, their own difgrace would follow, and therefore, under the pretext of providing for the fafety of the King, they were endeavouring to provide for their own: If the Bill paffed, the moft valuable part of the conftitution would be gone. Enough might indeed be left of it to enable Minifters to fwell their fpeeches, with pompous epithets upon its excellence, but nothing to fwell the heart of an honeft Englifhman with pride and joy! Inftead of endeavouring to correct their errors, Minifters manifefted a difpofition to filence the people who complained of them. Was it wonderful that the people fhould complain? At what did they complain? This had well been illuftrated by the noble Duke, who had fpoken fo eloquently in the debate. The people were infulted by feeing the moft fhameful negligence of their interefts, by feeing Minifters attempting to make it criminal to complain, by feeing the moft profligate wafte of the public money, by feeing the moft provoking infults offered to them, in the vaft ums that were lavifhed upon courtiers, and court dependents; by

 feeing

feeing penfions granted daily to apoftates; a penfion, for inftance, and a large one too, to a man who was once the champion of œconomy, but whofe chief merit with Minifters were that of having attacked the principles of freedom, and of having contributed very confiderably to involve us in the prefent war. Mr. Burke, the man he meant, and why fhould he not name him, was to have an enormous penfion, for endeavouring to inculcate doctrines, that tended to extinguifh the principles of freedom. It was upon this idea of the fuccefs fuch doctrines had met with in a certain quarter, no doubt, that a Right Reverend and learned Prelate had founded his political creed, and thought proper to declare, that the mafs of the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. [Here the Bifhop of Rochefter cried hear! hear! hear!] he heard the vociferation of the learned Prelate, he was perfectly welcome to do fo, that he might enjoy unenvied all the praife that was due to the worthy maxim; he believed he was the only man in the Houfe who could have ufed it; he believed that no temporal Lord could have foared fo high; be that as it might, there could be no doubt but that his Majefty's Minifters muft have relifhed it extremely, becaufe it fell in with their own principles. Indeed it was not wonderful that the Reverend and learned Prelate fhould have expreffed himfelf fo boldly, as it was always remarked by thofe who were beft acquainted with the human character, that converts are the moft violent, and the moft prone to run into extremes. The learned Prelate was willing to atone in Parliament for his conduct before his voice could be heard in it. He had formerly entertained different fentiments, he had attended, as he underftood, a meeting that was held in the Borough fome years ago for the purpofe of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, but the opinions of Bifhops as well as of other men varied and changed with circumftances, and therefore the Right Reverend Prelate could do no lefs than read his recantation. The Right Reverend Prelate had, however, not very improperly, at the fame time, confeffed his ignorance of law. Indeed without any thing more than a general knowledge of law, and fome acquaintance with political treatifes, he might have learnt that the people had fomething elfe to do with the laws than merely to obey them; that they had a right to difcufs their propriety, to confider their juftice, and when they felt them oppreffive to petition againft them, to complain of them as grievances, and to pray the Parliament to repeal them. Thefe were acknowledged conftitutional doctrines, doctrines laid down by every writer of authority on the conftitution in almoft every reign of our hiftory. The Right Reverend Prelate appeared, however, to have

 made

made a convert of the noble Secretary, whose ideas of the rights of the people pretty much corresponded with those of the Reverend Prelate. What, he asked, did the noble Secretary mean by stigmatizing with every term of reproach a peaceable assembly, convened for the purpose of considering a Bill, which they regarded as an infringement of their just and lawful privileges? Perhaps the noble Secretary borrowed his idea from another speech which he had once heard, and took offence at the tribunes which were erected in sight of rising villages, and smoaking brick-kilns. With regard to the free discussion of Parliamentary proceedings, was there ever a common turnpike Bill brought into Parliament, without being discussed in some meeting, more or less numerous, according to its importance? If the privilege of political discussion was allowed on matters of trivial and partial concern, how much more ought it to be permitted on subjects of important and general interest? Perhaps the noble Secretary was offended at the recent proof that had been offered him of the remains of the ancient spirit of Englishmen, which it has been the object of his whole administration to crush. They had been told that misdemeanors and seditions were frequent and alarming, but were not the existing laws of the country sufficient to punish and repress them? Where was the proof of that spirit of sedition which they had excited for the destruction of the constitution, or where was the proof of the exertions of Ministers to repel its assaults? Was there one person whom they suspected, whom they had not prosecuted? Had all the laws in existence for the prevention and punishment of treason and sedition been administered? Had every exertion which could be made been used; and after all, was the evil found to remain? If these questions could be answered in the affirmative, then something like a case was made out; but if, on the contrary, no exertion had been used to put the existing laws in execution against offenders, it was the magistrates who were entrusted with the administration of justice, and not the scanty provisions of the law, on which we were to charge the evils of which they complain. He knew, that Ministers had on one occasion exerted themselves, through the medium of the courts, to try how far the law of treason would go. Their malice was however disappointed by their ignorance, and because they could not bring their wishes to meet the law, they wanted to frame the law to meet their wishes. Every part of their conduct, he said, proved the incapacity of Ministers; and the manner in which they had acted manifested that incapacity in the whole conduct of this war. There appeared to be an intimate connection between the operations of their military and civil policy

licy. In the courſe of the war, they have talked mightily of armaments and expeditions, while their ſhips were lying inactive in port, and the troops were half dead before their deſtination was known. With regard to their much boaſted expedition and armament for the Weſt Indies, the ſhips were ſtill lying in port, and probably would not ſail theſe three weeks; and now they cry out loudly of ſedition, while we neither hear of any evidence being lodged againſt offenders, nor puniſhment inflicted upon the offences. His noble Friend the noble Duke, he ſaid, had traced, in a ſtrain of admirable eloquence, the connection between the circumſtances which gave birth to the Revolution in France and the preſent ſituation of this country; and the only obſervation which he would make, in addition to what his noble Friend had ſaid, was, that when any government perſeveres in a ſyſtem of extravagance and oppreſſion, means will always be found out by the people to get rid of their oppreſſors. The Miniſters of this country might go on for a time in the ruinous meaſures which they have adopted, but he warned them of the danger of driving a once free and high-ſpirited people, to thoſe raſh and violent ſteps which deſpair alone can dictate. He concluded with expreſſing his diſtruſt of any exertion that he could make being able to convince their Lordſhips of the injuſtice and impolicy of the Bill, though he had the conſolation of having done his duty, and been inſtrumental in meliorating ſome of its clauſes. The indecent haſte and contempt of public opinion, which Miniſters had particularly manifeſted in the courſe of their proceedings on the preſent momentous buſineſs, was moſt ſcandalous and ſhameful. He concluded with declaring, that he hoped that the ſpirit of the people would ſhew itſelf throughout every part of the kingdom, becauſe he was perſuaded that nothing elſe would ſave the State from ruin.

Lord Grenville ſaid, he ſhould not have riſen to offer a ſingle word in anſwer to the noble Earl who ſpoke laſt, had he not mentioned the caſe of Mr. Burke. To that he muſt anſwer, that he was proud to boaſt of the part he had taken in recommending the penſion of that gentleman, and was ready to take his ſhare of reſponſibility for it. He was glad to have the opportunity of avowing it, and of aſſerting in that public manner, that a public reward was never more merited for the moſt eminent and important ſervices. No man could boaſt of ſervices to this country and to mankind at large more meritorious; and he was perſuaded that the public would feel for that great character a laſting gratitude, for having oppoſed the ſhield of reaſon and ſound argument, to defend the wiſe eſtabliſhments of our anceſtors in

common

common with all the great men of former times, against the dareing inroads of the most pernicious and dangerous principles and doctrines ever broached by folly, enthusiasm and madness.

The Bishop of Rochester came forward, as soon as the Earl of Lauderdale sat down, and said, after the pointed manner in which the noble Earl had been pleased personally to allude to him, and to what he had said on a former night, he must intrude upon their Lordships for a few minutes indulgence. How far it was regular to advert to a former debate, it was not for him to decide; but as he had been so pointedly attacked, he trusted their Lordships would favour him with their attention while he endeavoured to explain. It had been stated that he had confessed his ignorance of law. That was a mistake: he imputed no such ignorance to himself. As a part of general learning, without pretending to any knowledge of technical distinctions, he understood something of law. When compared to those who had made that science their particular study, it was surely no reproach to be unlearned. Upon general knowledge of law, he did not affect to state himself to be inferior to other noble Lords; certainly not inferior to the noble Duke, who on a former night rebuked him for saying, that the mass of the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. That maxim he had not delivered without accompanying it with some expressed reserve, and it must be other arguments than those which he had heard from the noble Earl that evening, that could induce him to retract the sentiment. To that sentiment, adopted upon the fullest conviction and deliberation, he firmly adhered. The noble Earl, said the Bishop, alluding to what I formerly advanced, has said, that it is the duty of the subject not only to obey the laws, but also to study them. And who is there that can dispute with him the truth of this declaration? Who can more cordially join him in that assertion than myself? But it becomes a legislator in particular to study the law in its different connections and bearings; and let me tell the noble Lord, that I should consider myself unworthy of the situation I hold in this House, if I neglected that study. I therefore freely admit, that it is the people's right to study the law, as much as it is their duty to obey it. I as readily grant, they have a right to state their grievances, and, by all lawful and constitutional means, to endeavour to obtain a repeal of such laws as appear to them to be partial or oppressive. Admitting this, I must, under these restrictions, repeat, that the individual has nothing to do with the laws, but to obey them. Where any law particularly affects any number of individuals, it was undoubtedly the right of such

indi-

individuals to meet to difcufs its merits or demerits, and to come to a refolution either to fupport or oppofe, by reafonable means, fuch law; to pray the legiflature that fuch a law, as fhall appear to them to be good, may be enacted; or that fuch, as may appear to be bad, may be repealed: to exprefs their fenfe of it in fober and decent terms, but that after this was done, and the legiflature had decided, the people had nothing to do with the law but to obey it. This referve he had before expreffed, and had mentioned the fnuff and glove tax, as inftances where free difcuffion was not only juftifiable, but called for. By this maxim, thus qualified, he would fubmit to die under the guillotine if it were neceffary. The noble Earl, on a preceding evening, had faid, with that wit and pleafantry, which he could relifh even when directed againft himfelf, that the fentiment he had expreffed would have better become the mouth of a Mufti, than that of an Englifh Prelate. The fentiment he had promulged, fo far from appearing to him to be a bad one, feemed applicable only to fuch a free ftate as ours. In Conftantinople no man was called upon to obey the laws, becaufe the miferable inhabitants of that city had no laws to obey, but were forced to fubmit to the defpotic will, the fluctuating caprice and the momentary whim of their tyrant. Neither was the fentiment applicable to Geneva or any Republic, becaufe in a democracy, the people muft bend to the fudden violence and rafh decrees of their popular affemblies. But with us, where the law was fupreme, he would fay again, under the former qualification, that the people have nothing to do with the law but to obey it. With regard to the Bill before the Houfe, he thought it a wife and a juft one. It had been objected to it, that it created new crimes; with more confiftency and truth it might be faid, that it applied new punifhments to old offences. It had been faid, that the law as it ftood was fufficient to all that was required. The fact was undeniably otherwife. The licentioufnefs of the prefs could not be checked without a new law. Was it not notorious that men who had been confined for libels, lived in prifons luxurioufly on the profits of frefh libels. The pillory was fo far from operating as a punifhment, that to be fet in it was a ftepping-ftone to glory; it was confidered as the poft of honour, and the fure road to fame and fortune, ever fince Williams ftood in the pillory, for publifhing the North Briton, No. 45. It was therefore ardently coveted by the advocates and agents of libellers, and atheifts.

The noble Earl had mentioned an anecdote of being prefent at a meeting for Parliamentary Reform; he declared he did not recollect

recollect to what the noble Earl alluded; if the noble Earl would have the goodnefs to tell him when and where, he would acknowledge it, for he believed there were but few of the actions of his life which he fhould wifh to conceal. He recollected no fuch thing; nor was he much a frequenter of public meetings. Exclufive of recent meetings neceffarily convened for the relief of the poor, at which he had affifted, the only public meeting he recollected having been prefent at, was one about 14 years ago, and then he did attend, as he remembered, for the purpofe of fupporting a gentleman in an election for a member for Surry, in oppofition to a minifterial candidate, whom he did not think a fit perfon to be chofen. The Bifhop concluded his able fpeech, with returning his thanks to their Lordfhips for their indulgence.

The Duke of Bedford faid, that feeling himfelf particularly called upon, he muft fay, that from the explanation which they had juft heard from the noble Prelate of his extraordinary declation on a former night, there feemed to be fo much variation from what he conceived really to have been faid, and that had been guarded and qualified with fo much referve and exception, that he confidered the objectionable ground of the Reverend Prelate's fentiment in a great meafure removed, though the impreffion of the maxim, as firft broached, was not altered. He, for one, had not doubted the learned Prelate's knowledge of the law, indeed his fpeech of that evening proved that he underftood and knew how to apply it with advantage. If the noble Prelate had perfifted in afferting, in an unqualified manner, what he conceived him to have advanced in the preceding debate, he certainly would have moved, that the noble Prelate's words fhould have been taken down, and fhould have thought any man who held fuch unconftitutional doctrine ought to be himfelf placed on the "ftepping-ftone to glory, and in the poft of honour."

The Earl of Lauderdale coincided in the fentiments of his noble Friend, and was glad to fee that the noble Prelate had not fo far forgotten his duty, as to difdain to endeavour to make fome explanation of what the Houfe muft think was at leaft inadvertently uttered. With regard to what he had faid of the Reverend Prelate having been prefent at a public meeting, he had not mentioned the fact loofely or idly; he could affure the Reverend Prelate he fpoke from authority, having heard the circumftance from the perfon who fat next to him at the meeting to which he alluded.

The Earl of Abingdon delivered his fentiments in a defultory and eccentric manner againft the Bill. His Lordfhip faid, he

ſhould give his moſt hearty oppoſition to the Bill, becauſe he thought it an unneceſſary infringement upon the liberty of the people, which he would never ſuffer if he could help it. He was one of the guardians of the people, and had been a faithful one; he had never intrigued with any party. He took notice of what had been ſaid of the character of the Earl of Clarendon in a former debate, and declared he had an extract of no great length to read to their Lordſhips from a work, the author of which drew that ſtatement in a very different point of view, from that in which the two noble Lords (Earl of Mansfield and Lord Grenville) had placed him. In the firſt place he had to obſerve, that Lord Clarendon was a very ſuperſtitious fellow, and believed in ghoſts; but he would read a curious dialogue out of this book about him. His Lordſhip then took a book from his pocket and read a paſſage, in which Lord Clarendon's character was very freely dealt with. Being aſked (by the Marquis Townſhend) who was the author, he ſaid, he really did not know, as he purchaſed the work at a ſtall; like the Biſhops, the author was ſtall fed. Before he proceeded to read the next paſſage, he wiſhed to obſerve, that he thought the old doctrine of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance was revived: he was in hopes it had been quite buried ſince James the Second's reign. He wiſhed to aſk the Reverend Prelate, (Biſhop of Rocheſter) whether *vox populi* was not *vox Dei?* He would prove it was, and that God Almighty always inſpired the people upon ſuch occaſions, and would do ſo ſtill: he would prove this by authors as old as Methuſalem. He then read a page or two more, and having finiſhed reading, his Lordſhip ſaid, with regard to Mr. Burke, he had himſelf written againſt ſome of his doctrine, but he would never anſwer him, becauſe what he ſaid was unanſwerable. If the Bill paſſed, he ſaid, reſiſtance to it might be deemed rebellion, but if the compact ſettled by the Bill of Rights were broken, it might happen that the Government might be in a ſtate of rebellion againſt the people. His Lordſhip added, that the arguments that he had heard that day, appeared to him to be calculated to enforce the exploded principle of paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance, and that all who preached and maintained ſuch doctrine, whether Biſhops or lay Peers, temporal or ſpiritual Lords, were damned beyond all poſſibility of redemption by revolutionary principles. He ſaid he was not prepared to diſcuſs the Bill, or he would have come with a philippic againſt it, as he was ſure he could have urged arguments that would have convinced their Lordſhips it ought not to paſs.

The Bishop of Rochester ſaid in explanation, that under the reſerve in which he had explained his meaning on a former night, he would be ready at any time to re-aſſert his opinion. He owned, he had not peruſed the treatiſes of writers as old as Methuſalem, nor did he believe any authors ſo old had treated of the rights of Britiſh ſubjects under the conſtitution of this country, but he had read enough of the works of writers who were not quite ſo old to know, the freedom of diſcuſſion of all matters capable of being deemed matters of grievance was an Engliſhman's peculiar privilege,

The queſtion being put, that the Bill do paſs, the Houſe divided.

Contents	-	41	66
Proxies	-	25	
Non-contents		5	7
Proxies	-	2	
	Majority		59

POPULAR MEETINGS.

November 15, 1795.

SHAKESPEARE TAVERN.

AT a numerous and reſpectable previous meeting of the inhabitants of Weſtminſter, held at the Shakeſpeare Tavern,

R. B. SHERIDAN, Eſq. M. P. in the Chair,

The following reſolutions were unanimouſly agreed to:

It appearing to this Meeting, that many anonymous advertiſements and hand bills are in circulation, calling on the ſupporters of the alarming meaſures now depending in Parliament, to attend the meeting in Weſtminſter-hall, called by J. Gregory, Eſq. to conſider of the propriety of petitioning the Houſe of Commons againſt the ſame;

Reſolved,

That as nothing can be ſo deſirable to this Meeting as that the ſaid meaſures ſhould undergo an ample, fair, and free diſcuſſion, it is earneſtly requeſted that the moſt peaceable, equal, and impartial hearing may be extended alike to thoſe who may deliver their ſentiments on either ſide of the queſtion.

Reſolved,

That the invaluable privilege of diſcuſſing public affairs at public meetings, which was aſſerted in the Bill of Rights, has been found, by experience, to be not only conſiſtent with, but conducive to, the peace, proſperity, and loyalty of the country, and is abſolutely eſſential to the exiſtence of our free conſtitution.

Reſolved,

That nothing at this critical juncture can ſo much tend to bring this invaluable privilege into doubt or diſcredit, or more manifeſtly to forward the

the views of those who wish to extinguish all public meetings, and all popular discussion, as the appearance of tumult and confusion disgracing the meeting of Monday.

Resolved therefore,

That the friends of freedom, who cannot be truly so without being also the friends of order and the law, are earnestly exhorted to resist every example of provocation which might induce them to depart from that temper, firmness, and moderation, which are best calculated to shew a just confidence in the power of their cause, by a peaceable reliance on its justice.

Resolved,

That on the Chairman's leaving the Chair, whatever may be the decision on the question, it is earnestly recommended to all persons attending the Meeting immediately to separate.

Resolved,

That these resolutions be published in all the Newspapers, and circulated through every part of the city and liberties of Westminster in hand-bills.

By order of the Meeting,

(Signed) R. B. SHERIDAN, Chairman.

Resolved,

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his attentive and impartial conduct.

November 14.

WARD OF FARRINGDON WITHOUT.

(COPY.)

To the Worshipful JOHN WILKES, Esq. Alderman of the Ward of Farringdon Without.

Sir,

WE the undersigned inhabitants of the ward of Farringdon Without, request you will immediately call a Ward Meeting, to take into consideration the Bill now pending in Parliament, intituled, "A Bill to prevent more "effectually seditious assemblies, &c." and other measures now taking against the liberty of the subject and the constitution.

Signed by several respectable inhabitants.

In pursuance of the above request, I appoint a Ward Meeting of the Ward of Farringdon Without, to be held at St. Sepulchre's church, in the said Ward, on Wednesday next, the eighteenth instant, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

JOHN WILKES.

Guildhall, Nov. 14, 1795.

COUNTY OF SUSSEX.

IN consequence of a requisition to call a county meeting, to consider of an Address of Congratulation to his Majesty upon his late providential escape; I hereby give notice to the nobility, gentry, clergy, yeomanry, and other inhabitants of the county of Sussex, that I have appointed such meeting to be held at the Town-hall at Lewes, at twelve o'clock, on Wednesday the twenty-fifth instant, for that purpose.

FRANCIS NEWBERY, Sheriff.

Heathfield Park, Nov. 13, 1795.

AT

AT a numerous and respectable meeting of merchants, bankers, manufacturers, traders, and other inhabitants of the city of London, convened by public advertisement at the Paul's Head Tavern, Cateaton-street, on Saturday the fourteenth instant, to take into consideration the propriety of presenting a Petition to the Honourable the House of Commons, most humbly praying them not to pass into laws certain Bills, intituled, "An "Act for the safety and preservation of his Majesty's person and Govern-"ment, against treasonable and seditious practices and attempts."—And "An Act for preventing seditious meetings and assemblies,"

SAMUEL FERRAND WADDINGTON, Esq. in the Chair,

It was unanimously resolved,

That this Meeting hold in detestation and abhorrence the criminal attack recently made upon his Majesty, and will afford every possible assistance towards the discovery of the offenders.

That the said Bills are a direct violation of the Bill of Rights, and subversive of the fundamental principles of the constitution.

That the Honourable the House of Commons be petitioned, that the said Bills do not pass into laws.

That the Petition now read be adopted, and that the same do remain for signature at the bar of this Tavern, and that the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, the Honourable Thomas Erskine, and Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. be requested to present the same.

That it be recommended to the inhabitants throughout the kingdom, to assemble in their respective districts, to express their disapprobation of the said Bills, and to petition against the same.

That these resolutions be inserted in the Morning and Evening Papers, and signed by the Chairman,

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his manly and impartial conduct in the Chair.

SAMUEL FERRAND WADDINGTON.

MEETING OF THE MERCHANTS, BANKERS, MANUFACTURERS, &c. OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

ON Saturday, pursuant to public notice given by advertisements in the newspapers, a meeting was held at the Paul's Head Tavern, Cateaton-street, to take into consideration Lord Grenville's Bill for the safety of his Majesty's person and Government, and Mr. Pitt's Bill for preventing seditious meetings.

SAMUEL WADDINGTON, Esq. was called to the Chair.—He read through the Bill which has passed the House of Lords, and commented upon every clause, which occupied a considerable time. He requested gentlemen to hear patiently whatever might be advanced by every person in the room. As soon as he sat down, a gentleman entered upon a defence of the Bills in question, and was heard for some time with patience—but, when he began to vindicate the clauses of Mr. Pitt's Bill, which require the attendance of a magistrate at every meeting upon public business, and empower him to stop their proceedings at his pleasure, there was an almost unanimous murmur of disapprobation. One of the company immediately interposed—He said, it was not to be wondered at, that such sentiments had excited in-

stantaneous

ſtantaneous indignation.. They were unworthy of any anſwer, but he begged that the author of them might be heard to an end, as it was of the utmoſt conſequence that nothing diſorderly ſhould take place. This was accordingly complied wi h, and as ſoon as the defender of the Bills concluded,

Mr. Campbell moved to adjourn. He alledged that it was not ſufficiently known ſuch a meeting was to be held; and that therefore they ought not to proceed.

The Chairman ſaid, he ſhould obey the will of the company, but he was againſt adjourning. He thought the notice given of the meeting ſufficient. Much had been ſaid againſt public meetings, that they were packed for an expreſs purpoſe, or were diſorderly. In the preſent inſtance, no tricks had been played, every man was free to come and to give his opinion.—The adjournment was negatived.

Mr. Phillips ſaid, it had been in former times the characteriſtic of the city of London to act as guardians of the rights of the people, and to give the alarm, on every occaſion, to the country, when thoſe rights were invaded; but, alas! the ſcene was miſerably reverſed, and, he was ſorry to ſay, that it was to the meaſures adopted in the city of London we might attribute the bloody and unfortunate war into which Miniſters had plunged our ill-fated country; corrupt and wicked as Miniſters were, they would not have ventured on the dreadful buſineſs, but for the encouragement they had received within the city. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had artfully deceived the people of this country—he had pretended to be their friend and protector againſt arbitrary power; he had pledged himſelf to ſupport the rights of the people, and they truſted to his plighted faith; but how had he acted? he had riſen upon their ſhoulders to the height of power, and, far from regarding the rights of the people, he thought only of his own aggrandizement. "Let us," ſaid Mr. Phillips, "here make a ſtand againſt his ambitious projects; let us petition Parliament againſt thoſe wicked meaſures, which he now finds neceſſary to preſerve him in his ſituation; and let us ſhew to the world that we are ſtill poſſeſſed of the means of defeating (as the city has done heretofore) the abandoned enterpriſes of a corrupt Adminiſtration."

After ſeveral other gentlemen had ſpoken, a reſolution expreſſing their abhorrence of the inſults and outrage offered to his Majeſty on the firſt day of the ſeſſion of Parliament, and a Petition againſt the Bills, were almoſt unanimouſly voted by a moſt reſpectable meeting of between three and four hundred.

The following is a copy of the Petition.

To the Right Honourable the Repreſentatives of the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Merchants, Bankers, &c. of the City of London,

Sheweth,

THAT your petitioners, deeply ſenſible of the invaluable rights and liberties ſecured to them in common with their fellow ſubjects, by the exiſting laws and conſtitution of this kingdom, and while they regard, with the moſt grateful remembrance, the wiſdom of their anceſtors in forming and

and meliorating, and their firm and manly defence from time to time of the glorious fabric they had raifed, feeling it as they do their bounden and indifpenfible duty to endeavour to tranfmit it unimpaired to their pofterity; confidering the laws now in force as adequate to the prefervation of the public peace, and fufficiently coercive and efficacious, even as to the momentous exigencies of the prefent times; and conceiving that certain Bills now pending in your Honourable Houfe, entitled, "An act for the "fafety and prefervation of his Majefty's perfon and Government againft "treafonable and feditious practices and attempts," and an "Act for pre-"venting feditious meetings," are, in many refpects, utterly hoftile to the true and acknowledged principles of that conftitution they fo fincerely venerate and efteem, and tending in a great meafure immediately, and more alarmingly and extenfively in their confequences, to the infringement of many of the undoubted and facred rights and liberties of the people of Great Britain, do moft humbly pray that your Honourable Houfe will be pleafed to prevent fuch Bills from being paffed into laws.

TO THE LOYAL INHABITANTS OF THE CITY AND LIBERTIES OF WESTMINSTER.

THE friends of the conftitution, and of good order, are defired to attend the Meeting, which, according to public advertifement, is to be held in Weftminfter-hall, this day, at twelve o'clock, in order to prevent any riotous or diforderly proceedings, or any mifreprefentation of the real fenfe of the houfeholders of Weftminfter, on the meafure now depending in Parliament for the fecurity of his Majefty's royal perfon, the maintenance of the independence of Parliament, and the prefervation of the peace and tranquillity of the metropolis, and of the kingdom at large.

St. Martin in the Fields, Nov. 14, 1795.

AT a meeting of the Committee of the Affociation of this Parifh,

JOHN DRUMMOND, Efq. in the Chair,

Refolved unanimoufly,

That this Committee cannot let the prefent momentous crifis pafs without expreffing their abhorrence of the late daring outrages upon the perfon of his Majefty;

And fully convinced from thefe attempts, that additional meafures are neceffary for the fecurity and welfare of his Majefty's perfon and Government, they rely upon the wifdom of Parliament for adopting fuch as fhall feem beft calculated for the purpofe.

By order of the Committee,

JOHN DRUMMOND, Chairman.

St. James's Veftry Room, Nov. 14, 1795.

AT a meeting of the Committee appointed to carry into execution the unanimous refolutions of a numerous meeting of the inhabitants of this parifh, on the 11th of December, 1792,

 prefent

Prefent, WILLIAM DEVAYNES, M. P. Efq. in the Chair,

Refolved unanimoufly,

That this Committee will, in purfuance of the purpofe of their inftitution, hold themfelves in readinefs to affift the civil power in all cafes of tumult and riot.——That this Committee do meet again in the veftry-room of this parifh, on Monday the fixteenth inftant, at nine o'clock in the morning precifely.——That notice be given to the feveral inhabitants, whofe names have been enrolled to act as fpecial conftables, to attend the faid Meeting at that hour.——That a copy of thefe refolutions be communicated to the neighbouring parifhes, in conformity with the former refolutions to that effect.

WILLIAM DEVAYNES, Chairman.

Refolved unanimoufly,

That the thanks of this Meeting be given to William Devaynes, Efq. the Chairman,

By order of the Meeting,

LUKE IDESON, Secretary.

No. 49, Poland Street.

COUNTY MEETINGS.

AT a numerous and refpectable meeting of the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of the county of Hertford, regularly convened by the fheriff at the county town, which took place on Saturday laft, an Addrefs to his Majefty on his late providential deliverance, and on the prefent crifis of public affairs, was propofed, and adopted with every mark of concurrence and applaufe.

The only active oppofition was, as might have been expected, on the part of Meffrs. Whitbread and Plomer; they were fupported by five or fix perfons *.

The arguments which were made ufe of in oppofition to the Addrefs, were completely overpowered by the general fenfe of the meeting, and particularly by the ability and zeal with which Mr. Baker, the member for the county, vindicated the true principles of the Conftitution.

The Addrefs marks in ftrong terms, fentiments of indignation and horror at the late flagitious attempts on his Majefty's royal perfon; and in the moft diftinct manner attributes that outrage " to the fcandalous doctrines which have been propagated in the feditious clubs and focieties, all aiming at one and the fame object, the degradation and extinction of Monarchy, and the fubverfion of our eftablifhed Conftitution in church and ftate."

November 13, 1795.

LIVERY OF LONDON.

AT a numerous and refpectable meeting, held this evening at the Antwerp Tavern, Threadneedle-ftreet, convened by public advertifement,

Mr. Deputy LEEKEY in the Chair,

The following refolutions were unanimoufly agreed to:

* The reader will fee this account animadverted upon in the proceedings of the Houfe of Commons, Nov. 16.

1. That

1. That a loyal and refpectful Addrefs be prefented to his Majefty by the liverymen, freemen, and others, inhabitants of London, expreffive of their abhorrence of the atrocious and malignant attack upon his facred perfon, and their firm determination ftrenuoufly to fupport the glorious and happy conftitution of thefe realms.

That a Committee be appointed confifting of the following gentlemen, to withdraw and prepare the Addrefs:

Mr. Deputy Leekey	Mr. W. Lane
Mr. W. Angell	Mr. Parifh
Mr. Deputy Birch	Mr. Tate
Mr. Davis	Mr. Watlington
Mr. Irvine	Mr. White.

[For the Addrefs, fee Appendix Art. London, Liverymen, Freemen and other inhabitants, Nov. 28.]

It was unanimoufly agreed to, and refolved—

3. That copies of the Addrefs be left at the following places, from eleven o'clock till three, viz. the Antwerp Tavern; Star and Garter, Pall-Mall; London Coffee-houfe; King's Head Tavern, Holborn; and Crown and Magpye, Whitechapel; for the fignatures of the liverymen, freemen, and others, inhabitants of the city of London.

4. That the Addrefs, when figned, be prefented to his Majefty by the Committee.

5. That the thanks of this meeting be given to the Chairman, for his loyal conduct in convening this meeting, at the prefent crifis, and for his refpect for the laws and liberties of the country; evinced by his fteady adherence to the caufe of the livery, upon all occafions, and for his impartial conduct this evening.

6. That the above refolutions be figned by the Chairman,

GABRIEL LEEKEY.

FREEMEN OF LEICESTER.

THE Freemen of Leicefter, refiding in London, who fupported the intereft of Mr. Parkins at the laft general election, are defired to meet at the Paul's Head Tavern, Cateaton-ftreet, on Wednefday, the 18th of November, at fix in the evening, to confider of the propriety of inftructing their Reprefentative to oppofe the very obnoxious Bills now introduced into Parliament from paffing into a law.

N. B. The chair will be taken at feven.

November 14.

FROM THE LONDON GAZETTE.

AT the Council Chamber, Whitehall the 12th of November, 1795, prefent, the Lords of his Majefty's Moft Honourable Privy Council.

It is this day ordered by their Lordfhips, That his Grace the Lord Archbifhop of Canterbury do prepare the form of a Prayer and Thankfgiving to Almighty God for his late merciful prefervation of the King's Majefty from the daring attempts againft his Royal Perfon, as he paffed to the Parliament Houfe, on Thurfday, the 29th day of October laft. Such Prayer to be ufed at morning

 and

and evening service after the general Thanksgiving, in all churches and chapels in England and Wales, and the town of Berwick upon Tweed, on the first Sunday after the Ministers of such churches and chapels respectively shall receive the same, and to be continued for fourteen days afterwards.

And it is hereby further ordered, That his Majesty's Printer do forthwith print a competent number of copies of the said form of Prayer and Thanksgiving, that the same may be forthwith sent round, and read in the several churches of England and Wales, and the town of Berwick upon Tweed.

STEPH. COTTRELL.

[It contains also an order for extending the same to Scotland, by recommendation to the Ministers, &c.]

A FORM OF PRAYER AND THANKSGIVING TO ALMIGHTY GOD, &c.

O Almighty God, who in all ages of the world hast manifested thy power and goodness in thy providential protection of good and godly Kings, ruling in equity and justice, and professing and cherishing thy holy and eternal truth: We, thine unworthy servants, the sinful people of this land, do now prostrate ourselves before thee, with praise and thanksgiving, for that thou hast mercifully vouchsafed to frustrate the dark designs, and to bring to nought the daring attempts of desperate and bloody-minded men against the sacred person of thy servant, our Sovereign.

We acknowledge it to have been of thy unspeakable mercy, O Lord, that he was not cut off for the sins of the nation, and that our land was not filled with violence and blood. Continue, we beseech thee, thy watchful care over him. Be thou his defence and shield, and let no weapon raised against him prosper. Cloath his enemies with shame: bring to light their conspiracies, and disappoint their treasons. Touch them, O merciful God, with remorse: give them grace to see and to abhor the sinfulness of their ways, and the madness of their counsels. But if they still harden their hearts, and are incorrigible in their wickedness, let them perish by thy just judgements, that others by the example of their punishment may take warning. Knit together, O Lord, the hearts of this whole nation, as the heart of one man, in the defence of our King, our laws, and our religion. Long may the Crown flourish on the head of thine anointed, and may the work of thee his God, prosper in his hand. And when it shall be thy blessed will to call him to exchange this earthly kingdom for the inheritance of a glory that fadeth not away, grant that his sceptre may remain with his children, and his childrens children, from generation to generation: And that they, fashioning themselves after his example, zealous for thy truth, and ruling according to thy law, may walk in the light of thy countenance for ever, and, through thy blessing, reign like him in the hearts of their people. These things we humbly beg, O merciful God, for our Sovereign, for his Royal House, and for this Nation, in the Name, and through the Mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, NOV. 16.

A meſſage from the Lords informed the Houſe that their Lordſhips had paſſed an Act for the ſafety and preſervation of his Majeſty from Treaſonable Acts, and deſired the concurrence of the Commons in the ſame.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, after other buſineſs, moved, that the Act which the Lords had ſent for their concurrence, entitled "An Act for the ſafety and preſervation of his Majeſty's perſon," be read a firſt time.

MR. SHERIDAN hoped that if it was read a firſt time it would be printed before the ſecond reading took place; in the mean time from the general notoriety of the Bill, he conceived himſelf bound to oppoſe the firſt reading of it, and ſhould accordingly take the ſenſe of the Houſe upon it.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER was not ſurpriſed at this extraordinary oppoſition in the firſt ſtage of the Bill; becauſe he knew the Honourable Gentleman was in the habit of ar-arguing againſt it out of doors. He told the Honourable Gentleman, however, that he ſhould move for the ſecond reading to take place on Thurſday.

A long converſation enſued, upon the point of form in reading a Bill a firſt time without previous notice, from which ſtrangers were excluded, when the Houſe divided upon Mr. Sheridan's motion.

Ayes	-	-	26
Noes	-	-	170
	Majority		144

While the ſtrangers were excluded, a converſation took place, in the courſe of which Mr. Whitbread refuted a charge contained in a calumnious anonymous paragraph, which appeared in ſome of the morning papers of yeſterday, purporting that Mr. Whitbread and Mr. Plumer had oppoſed the loyal Addreſs propoſed and carried at the county meeting held at Hertford on Saturday laſt. Mr. Plumer ſaid, he could not ſubſcribe to the Addreſs carried on that day, becauſe it contained a calumny upon a certain deſcription of perſons, charging them with a conſpiracy which produced the outrage upon the King: Mr. Whitbread ſaid they had propoſed and ſupported an Addreſs containing warm expreſſions of loyalty and affection to his Majeſty upon his happy eſcape, but abſtaining from fixing the heavy charge of having originated that deteſtable act on any part of his Majeſty's ſubjects without proof.

Upon the motion for the ſecond reading of the Bill, the Houſe again divided.

Ayes	- -	151
Noes	- -	25
	Majority	126

LORD EARDLEY remarked on the impropriety of a public meeting having been held by ſome of the oppoſition on Sunday, on the ſubject of the Bills now pending in Parliament, and obſerved, that in this, as well as in other reſpects, he was ſorry to ſee too great a reſemblance to French principles.

MR. SHERIDAN replied, that the advertiſement giving an account of the meeting had no date to it, and that it might be therefore on any other day, as far as appeared.

SIR WILLIAM YOUNG remarked alſo on the want of reverence for the ſabbath, which ſuch a meeting implied.

MR. SHERIDAN ſaid, he did not mean to deny that the meeting was on the Sunday; but obſerved, that the caſe was urgent; that care alſo was taken not to drink the toaſts after dinner, with thoſe accompaniments to the toaſts which were uſual, and that the utmoſt decorum was obſerved. He alſo ſaid, the object of the meeting was to prepare a hand-bill, in order to diſcourage riot. He aſſured the Houſe, that he was by no means a perſon who was apt to fail in reſpect for the faith or profeſſion of the people of this or any other religion or country. He added, that the date to the advertiſement was purpoſely left out, as the meeting were ſenſible that it ought not to be announced to the public as held on a Sunday, and ought not to be drawn into a precedent.

MR. GREY, MR. FOX, MR. LAMBTON, and MR. SHERIDAN, oppoſed the Bill, on the ground of wiſhing to bring on firſt the motion for a committee to inquire into the circumſtances of the late attack on his Majeſty.

MR. RYDER, MR. H. ADDINGTON, and the CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, ſupported the motion for the firſt reading of it, and urged the indecency of oppoſing in the firſt ſtage, a Bill, of which all that they knew at preſent was, that it was a Bill for the further ſecurity of his Majeſty's perſon, whoſe life had been lately in ſo much danger; and a Bill, which alſo was recommended to them by the Houſe of Lords who had paſſed it.

After which MR. SHERIDAN aſked, whether ſuch a neceſſity did exiſt as juſtified the Bill in queſtion? If this neceſſity did exiſt, then ſuch a declaration went exactly to this point, that if proof was attainable, proof ſhould be given. For his part, however, he had heard of no ſatisfactory proof for recurring to ſo violent a meaſure,

nor had any ſatisfactory proof been yet adduced. Proofs were abſolutely neceſſary, and Miniſters were bound to furniſh them, as the *onus probandi* clearly lay with them. Before the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act, Miniſters had condeſcended to act with ſome little decency, with ſome deliberation, and had accordingly moved for the appointment of a Committee of Enquiry, upon the report of which Committee they afterwards proceeded. If the report were neceſſary then, it was more indiſpenſible at preſent, for upon what poſſible principle could they call upon the members of that Houſe to aſſent to the ſtrong meaſures which were then offered them, unleſs they eſtabliſhed an abſolute neceſſity for ſuch reſources, and confirmed it by evidence? He would not ſtoop to the Proclamation as a proof, for he conſidered that Proclamation as the declaration of the Miniſter. What authority then was there for conſenting to this Bill? The evidence in the Houſe of Lords, and the Addreſs of Congratulation to his Majeſty for his eſcape? That was not ſufficient; for without examining a ſingle witneſs, the Houſe had been content to take the matter as it ſtood, and had joined in that Addreſs of the other Houſe, without any farther inquiry. To this he did not object, ſo far as it related to the Addreſs alone; on the contrary, he very readily concurred; but did any man think that that evidence, taken in the Houſe of Lords, ſo vague and contradictory as it was in every part of it, and that Addreſs which followed, were by any means ſufficient to juſtify two Bills like thoſe which were in conſequence produced? When he conſidered this more deliberately, he was placed in a diſagreeable dilemma; for either he was obliged to imagine that a large body of men, capable of committing treaſon and the moſt horrible outrages, was actually in motion; or elſe he muſt ſuppoſe that there were men capable of inventing and believing any thing, who for their own baſe purpoſes, or from the influence of the moſt deplorable credulity, cheriſhed the idea of pretended ſedition, to accompliſh their deſigns of deſtroying the liberties of their country. It was always more hard to believe the leſſer evil, though in this preciſe inſtance he was compelled to do ſo. He was not only inclined to think, but confirmed in his opinion by ſubſequent events, that the preſent alarm had been created ſolely by Miniſters, for the accompliſhment of their corrupt purpoſes of libelling the country. He again repeated that this opinion was not grounded upon any ſuperficial view of the ſubject, but from the expreſs experience of the conduct, temper, and loyalty of the people. He remarked, that in 1792,

for ſimilar purpoſes, ſimilar reports of plots and conſpiracies had been induſtriouſly circulated. They were aſſerted in Parliament; they were pointed out in publications; and then, as now, they formed a part of the King's Proclamation. It was then generally rumoured, and as generally believed, that a party was in readineſs to ſeize the Tower, and commence a revolution. Before any perſon took notice of this manœuvre too, the moſt extraordinary means were adopted and enforced to circulate the Proclamation through every part of the kingdom with unexampled rapidity; troops were thrown into the Tower to defend it from attack, and all the Government appeared in conſternation and diſmay. He remembered alſo in the courſe of the trials which followed, that he had the moſt complete and diſtinct proof that the whole of theſe atrocious acts originated with the informers, reporters, and ſpies employed on that occaſion. Objection might be made to his attendance on thoſe trials; but as he had ſome cauſe to doubt the exiſtence of conſpiracies, he was reſolved to ſee fair play, and he only diſcharged his duty as a Member of Parliament, and one of the guardians of the public welfare in ſo doing. At thoſe trials, he again repeated, that he found the whole idea of a revolution to be forged; that the informers, reporters, and ſpies, one and all, declared, that they never had ſuggeſted ſuch danger was exiſting, and that the whole, upon the cleareſt and beſt connected evidence, was proved to be a fabrication. Now, this demonſtrated how far the declarations of Miniſters were to be truſted. It was true that a Committee had been appointed, and that from that Committee they received accounts of an extenſive treaſonable plot. The exiſtence of the plot, however, was brought from higher authority, and the trials were deferred till books could be prepared with ſuitable decorations, and the copper-plates engraved, with the repreſentation of pikes to alarm and irritate the public mind.

Here he came again to the juries, who in repeated caſes negatived the exiſtence of any treaſon or conſpiracy. At the ſame time, however, we received intelligence of a third plot, of which he had had occaſion to ſpeak before. A plot which was inveſtigated by the magiſtrates of Government, and in ſome degree confirmed by their proceedings.—A plot which was publiſhed with every dreadful particular, and exaggerating comment in all the miniſterial papers. This ſuppoſed plot, after all, was a contrivance for the aſſaſſination of his Majeſty at one of the theatres, with a ſtrange inſtrument which was never found, and by men who were afterwards releaſed. It was diſcovered, or pretended to be diſcovered,

which

which with Minifters was nearly the fame thing, at a very feafonable time, for it was while the Bill was pending upon which the other perfons, who were afterwards acquitted by the juries, were indicted. He knew not whether Minifters had purpofely contrived this plot to prejudice the minds of thofe juries; he hoped, he believed they could not be fo deliberately cruel. It was an action, however, which would always expofe them to cenfure, and he knew not with what feelings they could confider it, when they recollected that men had been for a long time detained in prifon, and afterwards difcharged without any allegations, ruined in their fortunes as fome of them, he had heard, had been, and undone in their reputations. It was certainly clear that the men who were apprehended upon this horrible fcheme of affaffination, were not guilty of the crime laid to their charge, or they would not have been releafed in the manner they had been; and what redrefs could be given them he was not able to tell, nor was it his bufinefs to enquire. This, however, was the third proof of forgery. He now came to the prefent times. Here he was obliged again to recur to his Majefty's Speech upon the opening of Parliament.—That fpeech which praifes the loyal temper of the people, and recommends the fpirit of order and fubmiffion to the laws, which they had fhewn under a fevere preffure, as an additional incentive for Parliament to apply with the utmoft diligence to the confideration of fuch meafures as may tend to alleviate their diftreffes. When this declaration was delivered, it is plain that Minifters had no idea of the exifting panic. We then heard congratulations in that Houfe upon the advantages derived from the war, one of which was, that it had not only deftroyed all violent revolutionary principles in France, but that it had produced a fimilar effect upon men's minds in the country. Here Mr. Sheridan wifhed to know how they could poffibly reconcile thefe declarations with thofe which they have fince made. How could they prefume, in confequence of one defperate outrage committed by fome mifguided individual, or, at the moft, upon their own confeffion, by a few mifcreants, to deprive fo loyal, fo patient, fo fubmiffive a people as they acknowledged the majority to be, of their deareft and moft facred rights? He recollected, indeed, what the Right Honourable Gentleman had that day faid with great warmth, when reminding him that he had forgotten the progreffive irritation, "What," faid he, "when meetings are multiplied and hand-bills are fwarming every where, fhall we affert there is no neceffity for thefe reftrictions?" But thefe meetings then muft have multipled fince the meeting of Parliament; thefe hand-bills muft have

fwarmed

ſwarmed ſince the meeting of Parliament: becauſe, if they were ſo notorious before, why did they put that declaration into his Majeſty's mouth, or why did the Right Honourable Gentleman himſelf aſſert that French principles were almoſt eradicated by the war? Upon theſe grounds, Mr. Sheridan inſiſted, that he ſtill had reaſon to believe it a forged plot. If the Right Honourable Gentleman would perſevere in his declarations, that an increaſing alarm and ſpirit of diſcontent prevailed throughout the country, let him prove it. He had moved a committee before, then why not now? He took meaſures then for the inveſtigation of a plot, when the reaſons were not one hundred thouſandth part ſo ſtrong. If he therefore now aſſerts that a treaſonable plot is actually in exiſtence, and flies from an inveſtigation of it, is it not natural to conclude he cannot prove it? But he thinks all proof unneceſſary, provided he can perſuade the Houſe to adopt his declaration. Yet ſurely, when he ſpoke of the unanimous loyalty of an unanimous people, though he ſuddenly ſeemed apprehenſive leſt ſome advantage ſhould be taken of his words in that conſtruction, by adding, "with a ſmall exception," yet ſurely I ſay, repeated Mr. Sheridan, when he ſpoke of ſuch unanimous loyalty, he cannot perſiſt; nor would any man ſay that for the ungovernable licentiouſneſs of the few excepted, all theſe obedient, virtuous, generous, and uncomplaining people ſhould be deprived of their deareſt liberties. No perſon, however hardened, could have the front to do it. But the Right Honourable Gentleman always flies off to France for his examples. France is the war-horſe he mounts upon theſe occaſions, and it would be a happy thing for this country, if he would mount that war-houſe leſs often. In France he enumerates all the inſtances of treaſon, murder, and rebellion, which aroſe from popular aſſemblies. In France he recapitulates the various atrocities of anarchy and bloodſhed; the confuſion and deſolation which followed the commotions of the people; and then exclaims, if ſuch and ſuch cauſes produce ſuch and ſuch effects in France, would not ſimilar cauſes produce ſimilar effects in England? But is it not a libel on the Engliſh Conſtitution; is it not a libel on the Engliſh people, to draw ſuch concluſions? There is no parity whatever; and he had always deprecated ſuch a wretched, narrow, and miſerable mode of reaſoning. The Right Honourable Gentleman had forgotten ſurely, that the enormities of the French people were occaſioned by the deſpotiſm under which they had ſo long groaned; that their exceſſes, when free, were to be attributed to their former ſlavery; that they had been oppreſſed and ground down till they had loſt the common

feelings

feelings and the common character of humanity, and that they were provoked and instigated by the evils which surrounded them till they became enraged beyond all moderation. He therefore denied that similar enormities could ever happen in England, and condemned such an opinion as one of the most mischievous that ever entered the head of a statesman. To argue that the same principles would have the same influence over Englishmen as they had over the deluded people of France, was to argue with a total ignorance of history, of general policy, and of human nature itself. It was impossible that any thing could work so fatal an ascendancy, not even if the same men who brought about those evils in France were to be in possession of similar authority here. It was the despotic government that had degraded and debased the French beneath the dignity of men, and drove them to extremes: but a people who had been used to rational liberty and rational rights, who have not been ground down, nor made the slaves of a corrupt Government, would never be guilty of such crimes. He pressed this the more, because it was the sole principle upon which the gentlemen of the opposite side rested; and unless it could be proved absolutely that the Bill was intended for the protection of the Monarch and the Constitution, he was unwilling to surrender the rights and liberties of the subject on such slight grounds. To detect the fallacy and false principles of such reasoning in a parallel view, he might urge that it would equally apply to prove in all cases, the barbarity and ill faith of Monarchs; and that after expatiating on the cruel conduct of the Empress of Russia, and the bad faith of the King of Prussia, an enemy to limited monarchy would be entitled to draw a conclusion, that all Monarchs must be barbarous and faithless, and thence contend for curtailing the power of the present King of England. The parallels would run together, and it would be found great difficulty to oppose the force of such reasoning.

An Honourable Gentleman had said the other night that desperate evils must have desperate remedies. This he acknowledged; but then he insisted, that the existence of the evils should be proved. The connection between the popular meetings and the outrage on his Majesty he denied; and thought, at the late county meeting for Hertfordshire, an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Baker) had acted with great impropriety in coupling the congratulation to his Majesty with a charge against the societies. He called it a charge so long as it was possible to have investigation; but if it were possible to have investigation, and gentlemen should then fly from it, he should no longer call it a charge but a calumny.

lumny. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Canning) had aſſerted alſo, that the doctrine of King-killing was preached at Copenhagen-houſe. Now if ſuch doctrines had been preached, proſecutions muſt have been commenced, or elſe there muſt have been great neglect in the magiſtrates and the Executive Government, and conſequently he was authoriſed to diſbelieve it. So far, however, from preaching ſuch pernicious doctrines, it was generally known that they profeſſed a ſpirit of loyalty to his Majeſty, notwithſtanding their declamations againſt his Miniſters, againſt the war, and in ſupport of a Parliamentary Reform. Another Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) had that evening ſaid, that inflammatory hand-bills were ſwarming in every part of the metropolis. Why might not theſe hand-bills be written and publiſhed by ſome of the ſpies for their own profit and advantage? Had not the ſpies themſelves confeſſed in a court of juſtice, that to encourage and deceive others they were the loudeſt in a cry for a reform, and the moſt forward to uſe inflammatory language? Here again then he had no proof that thoſe hand-bills were publiſhed or circulated by the ſocieties, unleſs they would ſuffer him to know from whom thoſe hand-bills came, and how they were obtained. If once a Government encourages ſpies and informers, it becomes a part of their buſineſs to commit ſuch forgeries and create ſuch terror. The Right Honourable Gentleman might contradict him, by ſaying, that the buſineſs of ſpies and informers is a reſpectable and neceſſary trade; but Mr. Sheridan maintained it would never be reſpected by mankind, and therefore ſuch odium and ſuch ſuſpicions muſt of courſe attach to it. Except in the ſolitary inſtance of Watts, however, he conceived it expedient that Miniſters ſhould ſupport their ſpies with whom they acted, as the men formerly did who brought up thieves, and inſtructed them, while young in ſtealing, to ſhare their profits. He had himſelf heard a perſon declare, that in the heat of his zeal and loyalty, he appointed a perſon to watch thoſe whom he ſuſpected, for which he gave him a guinea per week, but at the laſt he brought his accounts ſo alarming, that he gave him two guineas a week. Such, he ſaid, would be the caſe, and we ſhould go on from worſe to worſe, and he would not fear to attribute it to theſe very meaſures. He then took notice of the immenſe meeting which had that day been aſſembled in Weſtminſter, and the order and decorum exhibited on that occaſion; yet, if this meeting had been held before the meeting of Parliament, he ſhould not have been ſurpriſed if it had been uſed as an argument for the neceſſity of this Bill. He wiſhed an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Canning) would come into his committee, and

prove that the ſocieties did preach the doctrine of King-killing; and concluded by moving,

"That a committee be appointed to enquire into the exiſtence and extent of the danger of ſeditious meetings, as referred to in his Majeſty's Proclamation, and laid before the Houſe by his Majeſty's Miniſter, on the fourth of November."

Mr. Powys obſerved, that the Houſe did not, nor need to have ſpecific evidence of the treaſonable deſigns of the meetings; there were ſufficient circumſtances to prove the general tendency of their machinations. The notoriety alone was enough to juſtify the Legiſlature of the country in reſorting to ſtrong and decided regulations, to prevent the dangerous conſequences of ſuch inflammatory aſſemblies. It was dwelt on by the Honourable Gentleman as a grievance, to connect the outrage offered to his Majeſty, and the wicked doctrines preached at the meetings alluded to: but this was the ſame plea uſed by the ſocieties themſelves in their own juſtification. He would take the Honourable Gentleman's alternative, about the publication that was handed round at one of the meetings: either there was ſedition, or there was not. The Honourable Gentleman aſked if there was, why not prove it? If it could not be proved, the thing was a forgery. To this publication the name of Citizen Lee, as printer, was annexed; and the Honourable Gentleman was aware that the ſaid Citizen Lee was not his Majeſty's printer. It was notorious that Citizen Lee was uſually employed by the Correſponding Society; and in this inſtance, the Hon. Gentleman ſhould ſhew that he was not as uſual engaged by them. It was plain from all the proceedings and doctrines of the meetings, that the Government was the great obſtacle in their way; that at Government they aimed all their blows; and if ſo, Government ought to ſecure itſelf from the ſecret and open attacks of wicked and inſidious men. If this Houſe were attacked by robbers, it would be his duty to ſecure it againſt ſimilar attacks in future—he would be criminally negligent in neglecting ſo to do. Such was the predicament of government. The daring attack on the ſacred perſon of the King, was a blow at monarchy—nay more, it ſtruck at the root of the Conſtitution. But this attack apart, which aggravated and crowned all the former wickedneſs of deſigning men, there was ample ground in the allegations ſet forth in the preamble of the Bill, to induce the Houſe to bring forward and paſs ſuch a meaſure into a law. There was nothing brought to diſprove the deſigns of the ſocieties: the caſe was this, their guilt was of ſuch a deſcription, that it did not go ſo far as to ſubject the offenders to

capital

capital punifhments, as in cafes of treafon. What then muft be done? Were they to be fuffered to proceed in fuch a way as might end in the ruin of the country, becaufe there was no exifting law to lay hold of their feditious wickednefs? Gentlemen feemed to juftify them on the ground of excefs of patriotifm, as guilty merely of venial indifcretions. He appealed to their own documents, and authorities: he would afk any gentleman, who read their refolutions, did they mean no more than Parliamentary Reform? They wifhed to overturn the Government of the country: They held out the French fyftem as a model of imitation to England. This could not be controverted. Did not the proceedings in Scotland—did not the debates at Chalk Farm, and elfewhere, fufficiently juftify him in making fuch a charge? the Houfe were already in poffeffion of numberlefs facts to fubftantiate it. It was true, their views were narrowed fince laft year: then, they publicly declared that they fhould never petition Parliament. Now they ftoop to petition. The Honourable Gentleman faid, that their demeanour was peaceable and orderly; but the Honourable Gentleman's appearance for the moment might have fufficient weight to fufpend the operation of wickednefs. While gentlemen of fortune and talents attended their meetings, they might be willing to conceal the blacknefs of their defigns; and to declare, for the purpofe of deceiving, that their aim was honeft and conftitutional. He wifhed to afk the Houfe, was not the general notoriety enough to juftify them in the meafure? Was not this the ground in the riot act? "Look," faid, he "to the precedents of the Houfe, you will find that the general notoriety was all on which the Bill in that inftance was founded; and yet the meafure was agreed to in that Houfe *nem. con.* What were we to think of the conduct of our anceftors in the gunpowder plot? Did they go into evidence about that plot? Had they done fo, the Houfe of Commons ought to have been gunpowder-proof. Such was the cafe before the Houfe; the notoriety was fuch, that going into proof would be ridiculous—for, were not the Parliament of Copenhagen Houfe, Weftminfter, and elfewhere, fuppreffed, the freedom of debate in that Houfe would be foon over—the Britifh Parliament, as confifting of King, Lords, and Commons, would be crufhed for ever.

Mr. Jekyl faid, that if his Honourable and learned Friend oppofite (the Attorney General) had neglected to profecute the perfons guilty of the crimes which were fpoken of as fo daring and fo notorious, he would be guilty of a high breach of duty and of a wide deviation from his general character, efpecially when that neglect might have led to confequences fo fatal as thofe apprehended.

hended. The Houſe, he ſaid, had been hurried into legiſlative acts formerly, he thought, on too ſlight foundation. The Habeas Corpus Act had been ſuſpended, but the decency of a regular inquiry had then been obſerved. What was the evidence on which they were now required to proceed? Nothing of the nature of proof or neceſſity had been offered to juſtify or to authoriſe the preſent meaſure; nothing was contained in the evidence ſent down from the other Houſe, but garbled facts which could ſcarce form the ground of a warrant of commitment, and he was ſure that no honeſt jury could admit them as reaſons of conviction. No connection had been eſtabliſhed between certain proceedings of the Correſponding Society, and the outrage offered to his Majeſty, or any thing like proof offered of the dangerous deſigns with which the latter was branded. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Powys) indeed, with a happy flight of imagination, which he himſelf was unable to follow, had gone from Weſtminſter to Copenhagen-Houſe, yet he would aſk whether they had any thing but the imagination of the Honourable Gentleman to connect the Parliament at Weſtminſter Hall, with the meetings at Copenhagen-Houſe; or to eſtabliſh that intentions were there entertained of a criminal nature? If it was true, that the people had nothing to do with laws but to obey them, it was proper that the Houſe ſhould conſider well the laws they were to impoſe. The gunpowder plot, which the Honourable Gentleman had urged as a precedent for acting without inquiry, was extremely unhappy; for there the gunpowder was found, and the overt act was indiſputable. There was no reaſon to believe, though Citizen Lee was the printer of the hand-bills alluded to, that they did not originate from the ſources whence they had been ſaid to proceed, the very contrivance of Miniſters themſelves. The caſe of Dr. Titus Oates was an inſtance where, for their own purpoſes, the Miniſters of Charles the Second had encouraged, or had framed ſimilar machinations to thoſe of the preſent Adminiſtration. That they were really the production of Miniſters themſelves, and propagated for their deſigns, was confirmed by the ſupineneſs of the Attorney General, by whom no proſecution was raiſed, nor ſeemed to be deſigned. Such then were the pretences on which they were required to paſs two Bills, one of which aſſaſſinated the beſt privileges of the conſtitution; the other gags the mouth of every Britiſh ſubject; nor did they tend, in their operation, to meet the danger which had threatened his Majeſty, or correſpond to the outrage which was ſtated as the cauſe of their adoption. A gentleman (Mr. Pitt) on the other ſide of the Houſe, had formerly been no ſmall admirer,

and frequenter of debating clubs, though he ſeemed now to favour their ſuppreſſion, and to join with the late Magiſtrate, who had diſplayed ſuch diſtinguiſhed zeal for diſperſing them. Such, indeed, had been his love of debate, that he had even harangued in a maſk on ſome occaſions. Now, however, he had pulled off the maſk and diſcloſed himſelf in his true character. With regard to the inflammatory hand-bills and publications in circulation, he was not acquainted with their contents, as they had never fallen in his way; but there were ſome differing in their nature, though equally libellous in their tendency, equally hoſtile to the principles of the conſtitution: a man much in the favour of Miniſters, a ſervant of all work, had written a book in which he maintained, that the Britiſh conſtitution was an eſſential monarchy, and that the other two branches of it were derived from its bounty and dependant upon its favour. He ſaid, that if the Houſe of Commons regarded its own honour and dignity, or thoſe principles which were recogniſed at the revolution, they would not allow ſuch audacious libels to paſs with impunity. He ſhould feel himſelf an apoſtate from the ſpirit of his family, and unworthy the name he bore, of a great and venerable anceſtor, long diſtinguiſhed for his ſtaunch attachment to the principles of the Revolution, if he did not reprobate, with the ſincereſt indignation, the doctrines of this modern Sacheverel; and he thought the dignity of the Houſe was loudly called upon to inſtitute a proſecution againſt a publication which, under the very auſpices and protection of his Majeſty's Miniſters, libelled the conſtitution." But, ſaid Mr. Jekyll, cannot we imagine that a Miniſter, unſucceſsful in every undertaking in which he embarked, whoſe conduct was marked by a train of ſuch diſaſters and diſgrace, and the glaring folly of whoſe meaſures was only equalled by the obſtinacy with which he perſeveres in them, may produce diſcontent and diſſatisfaction?—Cannot we conceive that the contemplation of ſuch incapacity, and the preſſure of ſuch misfortunes, may have produced outrages among the people? Smarting under the ſcourge of famine, and heated by the view of their loſſes, and by the weight of the grievances which the accumulation of taxes and the ruin of their induſtry occaſioned, what wonder was there that they ſhould proceed to unjuſtifiable exceſſes? The Miniſter himſelf was ſenſible that the temper of a people muſt be rouſed by ſuffering to a pitch of diſcontent ready to burſt forth into an open diſplay of deteſtation. When the Miniſter of this country thought himſelf unſafe without the guard of a hundred conſtables to attend upon him at a city feaſt, could they doubt that he was convinced his own meaſures had produced a juſt unpopularity, and that it was unne-

unnecessary to seek for the cause of outrage in a settled aversion to Royalty. To this, indeed, has the Minister brought his country, that he can no longer bear the odium of his fellow-citizens, and now he devised laws to repress the display of these feelings. He was now to stop their mouths, not indeed with bread, but to wrest from them the miserable consolation of complaint. Though the Minister had, in some measure, abandoned that obnoxious clause by which the confidence of private families was to be violated, he had erected Magistrates into judges of logic, rhetoric, and of political opinions, and the immediate executioners of a rapid and arbitrary sentence, which they were entitled to pronounce. Shielded by these enactments, the Minister might venture to appear in public, nor dread the opinion of the people on affairs with which they were prohibited from intermeddling, nor fear that resentment which they were prohibited in any to testify. When the Sovereign is insulted for the odium of ministerial measures, and a few individuals break into indecent excesses, the whole people of England are to be deprived of their liberties. Before the House could determine upon a measure so fatal to the constitution, and so injurious to the people of England, they ought to require more evidence than that on which they were called to proceed, and that evidence could only be obtained by the inquiry.

Sir James Sanderson rose, principally to vindicate his conduct when he sustained the office of Lord Mayor. The proceedings of the popular assemblies then held in the city (1792) were alarming in their nature, when they proceeded so far as to declare, that this country could not be governed so well in any way as in the form of a Commonwealth. He said, every thing which had since happened convinced him that Parliament had not a moment to lose in putting a stop to the dangerous proceedings of these political clubs. If Parliament did not, the constitution was at stake, and soon would be gone.

Mr. Curwen said, that the laws of this country were amply sufficient for the purpose of suppressing criminal attempts on the constitution, and he was convinced, that if they were not properly executed, it arose from the secret views of Ministers themselves. He believed, in his conscience, that these men, now described as so dangerous to the Government, were allowed to proceed in their plans to turn the public attention from an abominable war, which was begun without necessity, and in opposition to the interest of this country, and to the maxims of sound policy, which, in its continuance, had been pregnant with ruin and misery. He could never forget, that some years ago, when it had been proposed to

 investigate

investigate the state of seditious meetings in this country, the Minister had undervalued their importance, and affected to consider them as too inconsiderable to merit the particular interference of the House. For his own part, he had no connection with seditious meetings. He even disapproved of many of their proceedings, and should not be adverse to put a stop to them if possible. Yet he considered those men as still more dangerous who reprobated the conduct of juries, and endeavoured to bring them into suspicion. Every man who valued the constitution rejoiced in the acquittal of the persons alluded to. An attempt was directly made to stretch the law, and to raise into the guilt of treason offences which amounted to no more than misdemeanors. If the hand-bills so frequently mentioned really were circulated, they ought to have been punished. As no prosecution ever was raised, he could not believe that they existed.

The case to which the Honourable Gentleman referred, of the gunpowder plot, was by no means in point. An overt act, really under the observation of the House, might be a reason for proceeding without investigation; but the ground of notoriety was not sufficient, because no connection between the meetings of any Society, and the outrage on his Majesty, was established by it. With regard to the hand-bills, he would have considered himself a traitor if he had met with such hand-bills without taking measures to bring them to light; yet it seems, on the present occasion, no disposition had been discovered to punish the authors of them. The Minister had endeavoured to brand every man who differed from him with the foulest imputations. He adverted to those converts whom the Right Hon. Gentleman had made to his party. It was the severest blow which the Government could receive. All confidence in the virtue of public characters was destroyed. When the world saw those very characters who had most strenuously exerted themselves in opposition to his measures, and who had reprobated him as the enemy of the constitution, so soon forget their professions, and join in the support of every part of his system, they would justly be filled with indignation. When men abandon their principles, and descend to all the mean and selfish conduct which they formerly were the first to condemn, was it wonderful that a contempt of the Government and a dislike to the constitution was excited? When groaning under the miseries which such combination produced, and the burdens which pressed constantly upon them, amidst a universal diffidence entertained of public men, was it matter of surprise that, under the weight of such evils, an attack was made, which expressed, in a most unfortunate and unbecoming

manner,

manner, the general indignation? The country now was worn down by calamity and diftrefs, and experienced the bitter fruits of that confidence which had been fo liberally and fo unwifely repofed in the Right Honourable Gentleman. He infifted upon the neceffity of having evidence before them on the prefent occafion. He would not truft the reprefentations of the Right Honourable Gentlemen. His conduct difplayed a uniform fyftem of delufion and impofture. At the opening of the Seffion Minifters extolled the peaceable and loyal temper of the people, the overthrow of French principles, which the war had effected, and afterwards came to propofe laws for the fuppreffion of turbulence and fedition, the neceffity of which they defended, upon events which happened prior to that period. If the decided oppofition which had been raifed to the pernicious meafures of Adminiftration, and the lofs of confidence that attended them without doors, fhould produce a change of Minifters, he cautioned thofe who had fo honourably diftinguifhed themfelves by their bold and manly refiftance of the prefent unconftitutional Bills, againft renouncing thofe profeffions which they now held. He thought that the reftoration of confidence in public men was effential to the happinefs of this country, and that the lofs of it had been the caufe by which difcontent had been produced and cherifhed. He faid, he looked upon the conduct of the Houfe in refufing inquiry where it ought to have taken place, and in their carelefs fuperintendance of the public money, as well as in their implicit acquiefcence in every minifterial meafure, as little deferving refpect; nor did he believe the people, in the difference of their fituation, to exercife fo much partiality in their judgment. What muft they think of fuch a conduct? But efpecially what muft they think of the enormous penfion beftowed upon Mr. Burke, to whofe private virtues he believed much regard was due? But in the mode in which it had been beftowed Mr. Burke's character had been degraded. Had he really deferved it in a national view, it fhould have come before Parliament; yet there he would have oppofed it. Even public virtue was not, he thought, always to receive public remuneration. Liberality of rewards rendered the purity of the motive fufpected, and injured the general caufe of public virtue and patriotifm. The confcioufnefs of having difcharged their duty was the beft and moft unequivocal reward of public fervices. He again preffed the neceffity of waiting for evidence, which, if it exifted, an inquiry would bring forward. The prefent meafure was too weak for actual infurrection, too ftrong for the actual ftate of the country. He utterly difbelieved the facts ftated by Minifters; they were fo

much in the habit of impoſing on the credulity of the people. He thought the pretence of the outrage was aſſumed to divert the public attention from the ruinous and deſtructive war in which Miniſters had involved us; and that Miniſters would not decline the inquiry, but from a conſciouſneſs of their inability to produce any evidence.

Mr. HAWKINS BROWNE contended, that the exiſting laws were inſufficient to the preſervation of the country from treaſon and ſedition, in the new ſhapes it had of late aſſumed. He ſaid, the conduct of his Majeſty's Miniſters had been inveſtigated, and the reſult was, that an increaſe of confidence had been given to them. The majority of that Houſe could have no motive for ſupporting the Miniſter, if they did not think it their own and the common intereſt. It was true, the Houſe ought to be extremely guarded in paſſing laws to reſtrain liberty; they ſhould neither be ſtrong nor too weak, but conſult the neceſſity of the time. In his opinion, the notoriety of the ſedition was enough to ſubſtantiate the charge on the preſent occaſion. There were various opinions of the extent of the guilt; but all were, in ſome degree, agreed in its exiſtence. Gentlemen were reſponſible to themſelves and their poſterity to prevent and ſuppreſs it. It was plain that the clubs and meetings in queſtion wanted to excite tumult and revolution in the country. They followed the example of France, and wiſhed to introduce French principles, to the ſubverſion of order, law, and religion.

The civil wars of France were more bloody than thoſe of this country; but even in this country great bloodſhed and calamity had been the conſequence of ſuch evils. The notoriety itſelf was ſufficient to juſtify Miniſters in bringing in the Bill; but the caſe was made ſtronger, when Gentlemen conſidered the Report of the Select Committee, appointed to inſpect the papers of the Correſponding Society. The facts that appeared were never contradicted; whoever read this Report, and the proceedings of the trials for High Treaſon, could have no doubt but the perſons were guilty of great miſdemeanors, though they had been acquitted of the charge of High Treaſon. He aſked Gentlemen, did they conſider what was paſſing on the great theatre of Europe? A country, the moſt flouriſhing ſeven years ago, was now reduced to a ſtate of the loweſt degradation; and if, on a compariſon even of French deſpotiſm with the anarchy that prevailed at preſent, and that was likely to prevail, nobody could deny but the former condition was much preferable to the preſent Republican Liberty. This deſolation, he contended,

contended, took place in consequence of clubs and societies, and it behoved this country to guard against the mischief. The question before the House was, whether they would go into a Committee to substantiate a charge which was notorious? To this motion he did not hesitate to give his negative.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL declared himself deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of the measure now brought into Parliament. He was persuaded, that the very existence of the country was at stake, and that no man was worthy of enjoying the blessings of the Constitution who refused or was afraid to state his leading views on the question. Had he not been influenced by this consideration, he should have sat silent at present, and listened to objections, after which he meant to have stated his opinion respecting what this House should adopt or reject for the public interest. But he was compelled from circumstances to speak in this early stage of the business. The Learned Gentleman then went into a vindication of himself in the prosecution of Hardy and others for High Treason; particularly for not indicting them for Misdemeanors and Seditious Practices; and declared it as his firm opinion, that he could bring no other charge against the persons accused than he had brought; more especially as Parliament had stated its proceedings, and had declared that a conspiracy actually existed. He vindicated both the House of Commons, the Jury, and himself, with respect to the acquittal of the prisoners. He stated, that his business was simply to determine, whether or no there was ground of accusation for the crime of High Treason? This was admitted by the Grand Jury, and therefore, added the Learned Gentleman, it was my duty to follow up the indictment, and submit the whole of the matter to the Jury for their decision. It was matter of great consolation to him, that there was no point of law in which he had been mistaken; but if the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Curwen) insinuated that he had failed in any part of his duty on that occasion, the greatest mark of friendship he had to request was, that he would follow up his charge with a motion, and enable him to meet it. He flattered himself he had done his duty to this House, to himself, and his children. He now acted conscientiously, as one who had a considerable stake in the country. It was one of the blessings of our Constitution, that an industrious man might rise to an honourable situation; and sorry should he be, were any of his children, at the age of twenty-one, not to feel the same incentive to industry as himself. It has been insinuated, said the Learned Gentleman, that I should have given up the prosecution at

the clofe of the evidence; but were either the Judges, who arbitrated in this caufe, or the Counfel on the other fide, of this opinion? I appeal to them, individually and collectively, whether I could have done lefs than I did? But the Bill before us has been called an outrage on the Bill of Rights. Let me remind gentlemen, that upon preffing occafions the Habeas Corpus Act has been fufpended again and again; and yet, to the occafional fufpenfion of this Act, are we indebted for our prefent fecurity, and freedom of deliberation. Our grand inquiry is, whether, by the prefent Bill, we can better fecure the Conftitution of this country in King, Lords, and Commons? The delicacy and difficulty attending the prefent meafure, he acknowledged to be in the extention of power which it gave to the Magiftrates; but there was a counterpoife and principle of re-action in the principles of our Conftitution to check the undue extenfion of temporary acts. The queftion is, whether the fituation of this country, at prefent, is fuch, that a leffer evil fhould be adopted to prevent a greater? His affirmative anfwer to this queftion would lead him to vote in favour of the Bill. He had feen two hand-bills; one was entitled "The Rights of Kings; and the other, "The Summary of the Duties of Citizenfhip;" both written for the Members of the London Correfponding Society. He read them to the Houfe, in fubftance as follows: "That the tyrants of England may be divided into feveral claffes; that moft fatal to the felicity of a country are governors of all defcriptions, priefts, foldiers, and lawyers." After afperfing the Monarch, they fay, "We are perplexed with another defcription of tyrants—men who hallow the Divinity. The Books of Mofes, and of Chrift, anfwer to the cobweb charters of ftate, produced in fupport of pious fraud, and were never written by the men whofe names they bear; thefe men have been in all ages the defenders of defpotifm; let us go on enlightening the country, &c." Another book, "The Rights of Kings," (publifhed by Citizen Lee, printer to the Correfponding Society, at the fign of the Britifh Tree of Liberty) ftates, "that the curfe of the Almighty to man is Kingly Government. Wherever this is eftablifhed, the country grows pale, and the inhabitants enervated through fubjection and depravity, &c." It has been afked, why does not the Attorney General profecute fuch publifhers? Not only has there not been fufficient time, but it has not been in my power to profecute them, fo as it may prove moft to the advantage of my country. Befides, the methods adopted for the circulation of thefe libellous publications is perfectly modern, and becomes one of the main engines in

 the

the hands of thefe focieties. You go into a libel fhop; on one fide you behold nothing but ufeful commodities in a way of trade, and in the other fide nothing is to be found but libels. After all, the queftion remains, whether the profecution of fuch offences would be an effectual reftraint or prevention of them in future? My opinion is, that it is impoffible for the laws of the country, as they now ftand, to deal with fuch publications, according to their circulation and tendency, or that they are adequate to meet the evil. No wonder, therefore, if thefe publications are multiplied *ad infinitum*, for the exprefs purpofe of grappling with, and rendering the provifions of the law infufficient. If the clubs, indeed, had changed their principles, the fanctions propofed to be impofed would be unneceffary. If we refer to the year 1792, we find thefe clubs circulating the publications of other men, which ftate that there ought to be no King in this country; that Annual Parliaments and Univerfal Suffrage are the unalienable Rights of Men, independent of Parliament; and that Parliament is but an ufurper of the Rights of Men. So long as there remained a King in another country, the Correfponding Society addreffed the clubs in France; when the King there was afterwards cut off, through the influence of thefe clubs, this Society ftate, that they hoped foon that that country would fend over their congratulations to a National Convention in England; whilft, at the fame time, the Englifh and French Societies profeffed to affiliate with each other, and thofe in France concluded that they hoped foon to fend to the foldiers of England pikes and bonnets of liberty. You will recollect alfo what paffed in the Scotch Convention—at Chalk Farm—and the Globe Tavern, when they declare their refolution no longer to petition King, Lords, and Commons, (though of late they have talked of ftooping thus low) whom they ftile their "enemies, plunderers, and oppreffors;" but that they would adopt other meafures, evidently calculated to overthrow the Conftitution of this country. Let me afk alfo, whether it follows, that becaufe the perfons tried for High Treafon were not convicted, there is no need of any legiflative reftrictions, nor any check to be put upon Seditious Meetings? My firm opinion is, that it is impoffible there can be any lafting national peace, fo long as thofe meetings are fuffered to proceed haraffing and impeding magiftracy. A law is wanted to check fuch practices as were never before known in fuch latitude in this country; this, I know, cannot be done without, in fome degree, putting a reftraint upon others; but *falus populi fuprema lex eft.* I defire to know, and to appeal to any man, whether the

meeting of the Corresponding Society at Copenhagen-House, and their sentiments, such as I have stated, does not bear a strong affinity with the daring outrages on the King on the Thursday following. I do not mean that all who attended those meetings adopted such violent proceedings; but the mischief that was pursued and intended, may easily be traced to those publications and meetings of the societies, to those especially where money is paid to the preachers of sedition.—The tendency of these is to deprave and warp the minds of those individuals, who are not well informed what blessings they enjoy in this country, and who are thereby naturally and strongly impelled to do inflammatory acts, dangerous to society, and destructive to the constitution. The question to be considered is, whether the Bill brought into this House, upon the notoriety of the facts stated, is to be sanctioned by us? In a future stage of its progress, I shall debate more at length on the provisions of this Bill. These will require great deliberation: whilst a regard to the public safety calls upon us to sacrifice a part of public liberty for a time, that we may more firmly secure a continuance of the remainder. I wish at present merely to rectify one mistake. When persons suppose that this Bill goes to disturb private and family meetings, and the enjoyment of innocent mirth, they egregiously mistake its tendency; nor is it calculated to disturb any club which any rational lover of freedom would wish should exist in this country; but rather it puts clubs of another description under certain regulations, which the necessity of the case justifies Parliament in doing.

Mr. Fox said, that he did not wish, in the present stage of the business, unnecessarily to detain the House; he would principally advert to what had fallen from the Honourable and learned Gentleman who had last spoken, who had gone into a very wide field, and introduced different topics, partly of a personal nature, and partly of a more general description, as applying to the question before the House. He was not one of those who thought that the Attorney General ought not, in the recent instances which had been referred to in the course of debate, to have prosecuted for high treason. The declaration of the two Houses on that subject was decisive. Whenever it was the opinion of the Attorney General that persons had been guilty of high treason, it was his bounden duty to prosesecute. But it did not follow, that because those persons had been acquitted of the crime of high treason, if they had been tried upon a different charge, they would have been found guilty of a misdemeanor. He had no doubt, that under this alteration of the charge, the jury would have conscientiously exercised their judgment, and

and brought in an honeſt verdict according to the circumſtances of the caſe. The Honourable Gentleman ſaid, that acquittal did not diſprove guilt. He was not one of thoſe who contend that acquittal was a deciſive or unequivocal proof of innocence. In common caſes there were many circumſtances that might engender doubt as to the queſtion of guilt or innocence. Firſt, when the exiſtence of the offence was aſcertained, the difficulty was to prove by whom it had been committed, to what particular quarter the guilt ſhould attach. Secondly, even when there was a moral certainty, with reſpect to the authors of the offence, there was often extreme difficulty in bringing home the charge to the individual, by legal proof. Neither of theſe circumſtances however exiſted in the caſe of the individual tried for high treaſon. There could neither be doubt as to their perſons, nor difficulty in proving that they were the authors of the acts charged againſt them. They were acquitted by a jury not leſs reſpectable than the Committee of that Houſe, who had drawn up the report reſpecting their proceedings. He would ſay not leſs reſpectable, from their ſituation in life; and in his opinions, not leſs reſpectable, becauſe they were removed from thoſe objects of ambition which might be ſuppoſed to have had ſome influence with the members of that Committee, and which ſome of them ſince might have been deemed pretty well to have attained. In the courſe of the buſineſs, he had been early convinced of the want of evidence ſufficient to convict thoſe men, and had broadly ſtated his ſentiments on that ſubject; but the Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, that Mr. Erſkine and Mr. Gibbs, the priſoners' counſel, thought differently. For one of thoſe gentlemen, from habits of long intimacy, he entertained ſentiments of the higheſt regard and friendſhip; for the other, from all he had heard of him, he had been taught to think with the greateſt reſpect. But he ſhould not have felt for one that ardent friendſhip, nor ſhould he have deemed the other entitled to that ſincere reſpect, if, in a queſtion of life and death, where they were called upon to act as counſel, from any ſpeculation of their own, with reſpect to the guilt or innocence of the priſoners, or with reſpect to the nature of evidence, they had neglected to ſet up that defence which was infallibly calculated to ſave the lives of their clients. Was it in conſequence of the reſult of the trials that the Bills were brought in? He was told that not from theſe trials only, but from their ſubſequent proceedings that the dangerous temper of theſe meetings had been proved, and that their miſchievous tendency could not be corrected, except by ſome new legiſlative regulation. He would appeal to Miniſters what had been the effect of the former regulations they had adopted. Had they not ſuſpended the Habeas Corpus act, upon grounds

which

which he muſt ſurely contend to be ſlight, and ſuch as by no means warranted ſo violent a meaſure? Had they not afterwards renewed that ſuſpenſion? The ſuſpenſion, however, they had afterwards allowed to drop during the interval of the Sitting of Parliament. He had congratulated himſelf at the beginning of the Seſſion, when he heard his Majeſty talk of the ſpirit of order and ſubmiſſion to the laws, which, with a very few exceptions, had diſcovered itſelf among his faithful ſubjects. Coupling this declaration with the conduct of Miniſters, in allowing the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus to drop, he had flattered himſelf that Miniſters had now renounced the opinion, that the evil to be dreaded from certain principles would be diminiſhed by vigorous judicial proceedings, and the proſecution of the war with France. He did not think for his own part that the evil was in any degree diminiſhed; but he conceived that Miniſters had begun to form more juſt opinions on the ſubject, that they had begun to perceive the folly and inefficacy of their former meaſures, and to adopt in the courſe of their future proceedings the ſuggeſtions of a milder ſpirit and more enlightened policy. Unhappy, however, for the country, it appeared from the preſent meaſure, that he had been miſtaken in theſe expectations. Was it in conſequence of the meeting at Copenhagen Houſe, or the meeting at St. George's Fields, that they had been induced to bring forward the preſent Bills? Both theſe meetings, he remarked, had taken place previous to the commencement of the preſent Seſſion of Parliament, when they put into the mouth of his Majeſty, a declaration of the ſpirit of order and ſubmiſſion to the law which had manifeſted itſelf in the country. Would they then ſay, that any thing which had occurred at thoſe meetings was the ground of their preſent meaſures. If they did ſay ſo, he defied even credulity to believe them. He had ſtated, that notwithſtanding the proſecutions which had been carried on in this country; notwithſtanding the ſtill more diſgraceful judicial proceedings in Scotland, which exhibited a mere mockery of juſtice; ſtill he had hopes, from the conduct of Miniſters, in allowing the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus to drop, that law would be left to its courſe, and even that liberty would revive; but then what had happened on the 29th of October—that outrage on his Majeſty, which they all equally deplored. He was told that outrage was connected with the proceedings of certain ſocieties. He was referred for proof to the coincidence in point of time, and the notoriety of their tranſactions. Here he remarked, that while Miniſters declined giving that proof to which the Houſe was entitled, and which they ought to have received before they conſented to entertain a queſtion of

ſuch

ſuch deep importance to the conſtitution, they brought a ſort of evidence which was worſe than all; evidence was brought from a Proclamation of the Executive Government. An attempt was made ſo far to degrade the Houſe, as to bring in a Bill upon the evidence of a Proclamation of his Majeſty's Miniſters. Part of the Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech he confeſſed had ſtrongly affected him. He talked of the contempt into which Parliament had fallen. If Parliament were ſo careleſs of their duty, ſo loſt to all ſenſe of character as to take a Proclamation of the Executive Government as evidence of the facts, upon which they were to ground their proceedings, they would indeed deſerve that contempt which they were ſaid to have incurred. The Honourable Gentleman had read a number of papers, in order to ſhew the atrocious ſpirit and dangerous views of the perſons who compoſed theſe meetings. It was a ſort of evidence which he confeſſed he received with much ſuſpicion, in conſequence of the diſtruſt with which he was accuſtomed to receive every ſuch communication from that quarter of the Houſe. If ſuch facts exiſted, as had been ſtated by the Honourable Gentleman, why were they not brought before the Houſe in ſuch a way as might conſtitute a proper ground for their proceedings? Why ought not the Houſe to have the ſpies of the Right Honourable Gentleman at their bar, in order to examine them as to their report of the facts which might have come under their inſpection? The learned Gentleman ſays that ſpies are inſtruments whom Government has at all times found neceſſary to employ.

Mr. Fox admitted that there were different ſorts of ſpies. Firſt, there were perſons who might by chance be privy to ſome intelligence, which they might deem it eſſential for the intereſts or ſafety of the State to communicate, and theſe he ſhould ſet down as uſeful or meritorious ſpies. But there were others who went certain lengths in order to acquire information, and made certain ſacrifices, in order more completely to get into the ſecrets of others; theſe he ſhould reckon at leaſt doubtful. But there were a third ſort, who, in order to ſerve their own vile purpoſes, inſinuated themſelves into the confidence of thoſe whom they wiſhed to betray, not only affected a ſimilarity of ſentiment, but even ſpurred and goaded them on, prompted them to adopt more violent language, and more reprehenſible propoſitions, than they would otherwiſe have employed—of ſuch characters there were no words in the Engliſh language which could ſufficiently mark his contempt and deteſtation. This was the deſcription of ſpy, which moſt frequently appeared in the caſes that ſolicited their notice—the trials at the Old Bailey. In all inſtances the ſpy had been found the moſt furious in his

his ſentiments, and the moſt intemperate in his language. He had often been the exaggerated and falſifying reporter of theſe proceedings, of which he himſelf had been prime mover and contriver.

The Attorney General here interrupted Mr. Fox, to tell him that an information had been preferred againſt one of the witneſſes for perjury, but had not been proceeded upon by the Grand Jury.

Mr. Fox reſumed. It was no proof to him of the innocence of the man, that a Bill had not been found againſt him. But he would here refer to the trial of Walker of Mancheſter, the proceedings on which were of ſuch a nature, that they made his blood run cold whenever he read or thought of them. Mr. Walker was not indeed put in peril of his life, for it required the oaths of two witneſſes to have brought him to condign puniſhment; and fortunately for human nature, a ſecond Dunn was not to be found. But he was put in hazard of his character, his liberty and his fortune; and in the courſe of the trial it was found, that the perſon by whom he was accuſed was notoriouſly perjured. Yet, on the oath of this very man, one of the name of Paul, had for ſome time been kept in priſon. To be ſure he was liberated upon the conviction of the perjury of his accuſer. But what reparation did Miniſters grant to this man, thus expoſed to ſuffer from the falſehood and corruption of another? It was, ſurely, the duty of Government to make amends to the innocent individual, ſubjected to the diſgrace and hardſhips of confinement, from the negligence of Miniſters, or the depravity of their agents. The Honourable Gentleman ſaid, that theſe were times which he could not contemplate without the moſt ſerious apprehenſions with reſpect to the fate of all who were dear to him. He confeſſed that he did not think leſs ſeriouſly of the times than the Honourable Gentleman. It had been aſked, whether it was fair to ſet down the whole of the friends and ſupporters of Miniſters as in a conſpiracy againſt the liberties of the country? To this he would anſwer by another queſtion, Did not the Honourable Gentleman believe that there were in the Correſponding Society ſome men, who were morally good, and who were by no means actuated by thoſe deteſtable views and malignant paſſions which were upon every occaſion indiſcriminately aſcribed to the whole of the body? So in the ſame way he might believe, that there were ſome ſupporters of Miniſters, who really meant well, though they were blind dupes of the folly, or unconſcious inſtruments of the wicked policy of Miniſters. But though he by no means confounded every ſupporter of Miniſters under the ſame cenſure; yet if he ſaw a rooted deſign on the part of Miniſters

to

to invade the liberties of the ſubject, followed up by ſucceſſive efforts, all directed to that object, he ſhould think himſelf wanting to his duty, if he did not take all peaceable means of ſtirring up oppoſition on the part of the country, to the progreſs of their meaſures.

The Honourable Gentleman has ſaid, that as much practical liberty has exiſted in this country, as was enjoyed under any Government, conſiſtently with order. He ſaid, continued Mr. Fox, *has exiſted*, and I will grant his propoſition, if he does not go far back in the hiſtory of the country, nor brings down the date of that liberty to the period in which I now ſpeak. I mean no perſonal reflection; but I have no heſitation in ſaying, that ſince the commencement of the reign of his preſent Majeſty, I conceive the enjoyment of that freedom to have ceaſed. The Honourable Gentleman thinks that the liberty of this country has been ſupported by the checks which it has received from occaſional interruptions. I, on the contrary, think, that under the circumſtances of our Government, that liberty never would have been ſupported, had not the enormous influence of the Crown been counteracted by the liberty of the preſs, and the liberty of ſpeech. The operation of the preſent Bill would interrupt the meeting of clubs, occaſional attendance on which formed the chief, if not the ſole, luxury of perſons in certain ſtations. [A cry of No! No.] If it did not do ſo, he could only ſay, that as it was at preſent expreſſed, he did not underſtand it. The Honourable Gentleman told us, that the whole of Government was attacked. He was not an advocate for attacks on Government, but he was an advocate for human nature, when it was oppreſſed. It had been well ſaid in a former war, with reſpect to the Americans, "You drive them to madneſs, and will quarrel with them about their ravings?" When he looked to the many calamities which the war had brought upon the country; when he ſaw, during them all, an acquieſcent and confiding Houſe of Commons, he thought he could account for ſome part of that ſpirit of murmuring and diſcontent which pervaded a great body of the people. He ſtated this to have been the only war ſince the peace of Utrecht, which had in no one inſtance given riſe to any enquiry in the Houſe of Commons. Even during the famous wars of Chatham, and the victorious campaigns of Marlborough, enquiries were inſtituted reſpecting ſome of the operations. Had this been the only war ſo eminently brilliant, ſo uniformly ſucceſsful, ſo clear in its details, ſo œconomical in its arrangements, as to claim exemption from that accuracy of inveſtigation, which had been diſplayed at former periods in the military hiſtory of this coun-

country? With this negligence of the Houſe of Commons before their eyes, with the experience of their own accumulated ſufferings, was it to be wondered at that men ſhould complain, more eſpecially when the betrayers of their intereſts, and the authors of their misfortunes, were at the ſame time making an attempt to deprive them of their deareſt and beſt rights? An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Powys), the ſting of whoſe eloquence chiefly conſiſted in its perſonality, had alluded to an immenſe number of people, who had that day been aſſembled without tumult or diſorder. He appealed to the gentlemen who were preſent, whether the immenſe concourſe had not ſhewn themſelves to be ſeriouſly impreſſed with the importance of the queſtion, and deeply intereſted in the iſſue. He muſt confeſs, that of the many meetings, which, in the courſe of his public duty, he had been called upon to attend, he never had witneſſed one which, from its numbers or deportment, diſcovered ſo ſtrong an impreſſion of the object for which they were met, and ſo fixed a determination to purſue it by all proper means. You may prevent men from complaining, ſaid Mr. Fox, but you connot prevent them from feeling. Either your Bills muſt remain waſte paper, or they muſt be carried into execution with circumſtances of the greateſt oppreſſion. And, depend upon it, if men ſpeak leſs, they will feel more, and arms will be left them as the only reſource to procure redreſs to themſelves, or exerciſe vengeance upon their oppreſſors. Mr. Fox then proceeded to refute the pretext for not going into an enquiry, from the ſuppoſed urgency of danger. He ſtated the little advantage which Miniſters had derived from their ſyſtem of alarm and terror, from an inſtance perſonal to himſelf. If, at the commencement of the war it ſhould have been propoſed, that he ſhould make a ſpeech, as he had that day done to thirty thouſand people; the queſtion would not have been, whether he ſhould have been ſuffered to ſpeak, but whether he ſhould have been ſuffered to exiſt. By that large concourſe, he had that day been heard with unanimity and approbation; ſo great was the change that had taken place in their ſentiments. He concluded with recommending to Miniſters to abandon a ſyſtem, which had hitherto only been marked by reverſes and diſappointments. The preſſure of the war was the original ſource of the diſcontents of the people, and the meaſures taken to repreſs theſe diſcontents had only increaſed the evil. The bad ſucceſs of their policy ought to induce them to trace back their former footſteps,

Iterare curſus

——*Relictos*;

and

and to try what effects they could produce upon the people, by treating them with respect and gentleness. He reminded them of the saying of a great man, whom he had often occasion to quote, "Try all means of gentleness; terror can always be applied to, but never without danger, for if it fails in one instance, it produces contempt ever after."

Mr. Chancellor Pitt said, that he did not mean to follow the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) into all the points which he had brought forward. There were some, however, so closely connected with the peace and prosperity of the country, to which he could not forbear to advert. The Right Honourable Gentleman would not easily convince a majority of that House, or of the country, that there existed such grievances as justified a general spirit of discontent, if not of disaffection. As to the particular miscarriages which had taken place in the course of the war, the question was, if from misfortunes and disappointments there was such evidence of misconduct as called for investigation. That question had been repeatedly tried, and decided in the negative. Gentlemen on the other side might clamour, but they would always allow the majority of that House to exercise that right, which no violent or desperate language on their part should induce him to abandon. The Right Honourable Gentleman had dated the liberties of the country from the period of the Revolution, and had directly asserted, that since the commencement of the present reign, they had been on the decline. In opposition to this extraordinary proposition, he would contend, that never had the liberties of the country existed more pure, or been better secured in their exercise to the subject, by the adoption of wise and salutary regulations, than during the reign of his present Majesty. The Right Honourable Gentleman had taken occasion, in the course of his speech, to state some matter personal to himself. He had boasted that he had that day been heard with attention and applause by thirty thousand people. How far his calculation of the numbers present at the meeting, to which he alluded, aided by a reinforcement from Copenhagen-house, might be accurate, he should not take upon him to say. He would advise the Right Honourable Gentleman to wait till the inhabitants of Westminster had some more regular opportunity of expressing their sentiments with respect to what had passed at that meeting. He thought it not very strange, that the disaffected should have listened with applause to the language which had that night been employed by the Right Honourable Gentleman, though, when such language was uttered out of doors, he would submit to him whether their applause

was

was either very ſafe or deſirable. [A good deal of noiſe having for ſome time taken place on both ſides of the Houſe, the Speaker called General Tarleton, who was then making uſe of ſome irregular expreſſions, to order.]

General Tarleton.—Mr. Speaker, I muſt remark, that in the courſe of a very lively debate, the Speaker has repeatedly called this ſide of the Houſe to order, when the uproar has been equal, if not greater on the other. Theſe words produced a conſiderable ſenſation on the Houſe; and there was a cry that they ſhould be taken down; on which the Speaker ſtated what would be the regular mode of proceeding. General Tarleton having declined to repeat his words,

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he felt it a duty he owed to the Houſe, and to the dignity of the Chair, to ſtate, upon the beſt of his recollection, what the words were. He ſtated them to be—"I complain of great partiality in the conduct of the Chair; Mr. Speaker, I muſt remark, that in the courſe of a very lively debate, &c."

Mr. Sheridan affirmed, that the Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer was incorrect in his ſtatement. The words which he had taken down were ſpoken at two ſeveral times, the firſt—"I complain of great partiality in the conduct of the Chair," were ſpoken irregularly, before he was called to order. The other expreſſions which he had made uſe of, when upon his legs, were thoſe which were deſired to be taken down. A conſiderable degree of perſonal altercation followed. Mr. Fox, Mr. Jekyll, and Mr. Curwen, bore teſtimony to the dignified and impartial manner in which the Speaker had always conducted himſelf in the Chair.

General Tarleton roſe, and reprobated in the moſt pointed and perſonal manner the miſtatement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; then, addreſſing himſelf to the Speaker, he ſaid, that he had always entertained great reſpect for the Chair, and a like veneration for the Houſe; and ſince it was apparent, that the majority did not accord with him on the preſent occaſion, he muſt acknowledge himſelf ſorry for what he had addreſſed to the Chair.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt ſaid, that from the knowledge he had of the diſpoſition of the Honourable Gentleman who filled the Chair, he truſted he would feel himſelf ſatisfied; the Honourable Gentleman having expreſſed his ſorrow for what he had ſaid, in that caſe, he hoped no trace of this affair would remain upon the Journals.

The Speaker thanked the Houſe for the ſupport he had experienced on the preſent occaſion, and declared that he wiſhed to

have

have the honour and happineſs of filling his preſent ſituation no longer than he ſhould be found to retain the approbation and confidence of the Houſe.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt then reſumed his ſpeech: he ſaid, that having now diſpoſed of what he conſidered the preliminary obſervations of the Right Honourable Gentleman, he ſhould not have much more to trouble the Houſe with, becauſe it was not his intention to anticipate diſcuſſion upon the Bills. But late as it was, the Houſe would excuſe him, if he treſpaſſed a little longer upon their patience, in reply to ſome obſervations of the Right Honourable Gentleman. He had ſtated, that the Miniſters had called upon Parliament to paſs theſe Bills, without laying before them any ground upon which they could be convinced of the neceſſity of them. When the Bills did come forward, he would venture to aſſert, that he would lay ſuch grounds before the Houſe as ſhould ſatisfy their minds upon the ſubject. He remarked that the delay which would be neceſſary, in order to procure legal proof, would afford to the diſaffected an advantage, with reſpect to the accompliſhment of their deſigns, at a moment when it was of the utmoſt conſequence to prevent a repetition of their attempts. He did not mean to bring ſtrict legal proof, ſuch as would be neceſſary to convict a man of a capital offence; but he would prove it by fair reaſoning, and from a general view of the ſtate of affairs: but then, it had been aſked why, if this danger exiſts and has exiſted for ſome time, did you ſuffer the Habeas Corpus Act to revive? Why did you not continue its ſuſpenſion? Whether Miniſters had done right or not, in not propoſing to continue the ſuſpenſion, he would not undertake to ſay; but ſtill he could ſtate ſome ground to juſtify their conduct. Whatever the opinion of the Right Honourable Gentleman might be, with reſpect to the trials for high treaſon, and the evidence produced upon that occaſion, he was ſure that it had made a ſtrong impreſſion upon the public. When that immenſe maſs of matter was laid open, and the real deſigns of theſe Societies developed, it ſerved to open the eyes of the unwary, to check the incautious, and to deter the timid. This, when conſidered, and alſo the wretched ſituation to which France was reduced, ſo wretched, that even the French themſelves complained of the tyranny under which they laboured; when theſe points were conſidered, he contended, there was fair ground for Miniſters to ſuppoſe, that the deluſion would ceaſe: it was therefore prudent to try the effect of a lenient meaſure; and what was the effect? From the moment the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus act was taken off, all the plans of theſe Societies revived,

and continued in a progreſſive ſtate till the meeting of Parliament. But the Right Honourable Gentleman called for ſome proof, to ſhew the connection of the meeting at Copenhagen-Houſe and the attack upon his Majeſty. He had ſtated before, that he could not prove this by ſtrict legal evidence; but it was almoſt impoſſible to reaſon fairly, and come to two concluſions upon the ſubject. What was the moment in which it was deemed proper to commit this outrage on his Majeſty? One would have thought that the King's paternal fondneſs for his people, and his many virtues, would have rendered him ſecure at any time, but more eſpecially when coming down to his Parliament, when in the diſcharge of one of the moſt venerable and uſeful of his duties, when going to put thoſe aſſemblies in motion, from which all legal redreſs for grievances muſt ſpring; on which the repeal of bad and the formation and maintenance of good laws muſt depend; this was the moment choſen for an attack upon one of the branches of the Government, for an inſult upon the collective Majeſty of the Conſtitution. Could it be ſuppoſed that this daring outrage was committed without ſome hope of ſupport from ſome party or other? Certainly not—with reſpect to the alliance ſuppoſed to be formed between the Right Hon. Gentleman and his friends with the London Correſponding Society, he wiſhed to caution that Gentleman and his friends, that that ſociety was ſtill perſiſting in its original plan for the deſtruction of the Conſtitution; and the Honourable Gentleman would, without his conſent, be uſed as an inſtrument for promoting the attainment of that end—whether it was in public meetings, for the redreſs of grievances, in charges of extravagance in the expenditure of public money, in accuſations againſt Miniſters for that ſcarcity which was the effect of unfortunate ſeaſons, or whatever mode of proceeding they adopted, ſtill the object was the ſame—the ſubverſion of the Conſtitution. He had waited in expectation of ſome effect from the reſult of the trials, from the repeal of the Habeas Corpus, and ſtill more from the dreadful leſſons which France had exhibited: but when he found all that had happened only tended to encourage the diſaffected to proſecute their views with renewed activity and boldneſs, and that their enmity was not merely directed againſt any particular part of the Conſtitution, but that their deſign was to tear it up root and branch; it then became neceſſary to adopt ſome new regulation, in order to meet the emergency of the caſe, and check the progreſs of a miſchief, which, if ſuffered to go on, might be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences.

Sir William Milner, alluding to the interruption which had taken place in the debate, approved of the conduct of the

Speaker,

Speaker, and applauded his impartiality on all occasions. He disapproved entirely of the Bill before the House. He thought that the public should never be impeded in their wishes to meet to discuss public affairs. He commended the manner in which the Westminster meeting had that day been conducted. He was very sorry to hear that there were soldiers so near the place of so peaceable and so proper an assembly of persons. He had heard that soldiers would be brought near to the place if any such meeting should be held in Yorkshire. He thought that to bring soldiers near a place where there was to be a meeting for political purposes, was a practice of a very despotic nature, as it tended to overawe the assembly, and to prevent their speaking their minds with freedom. He did not at all see any connection between the proceedings of Copenhagen-House and the attack that was made on his Majesty; an attack which he detested as much as any man in the kingdom. He expressed great contempt for the idea that a public debating Society could engender any treason; he wanted to know what sort of treason that was which a man might go to hear on paying sixpence. If there was any treason to be feared at all it must be where the proceedings of the conspirators are private. He thought the punishment of all those who were guilty of any outrage, in consequence of political opinions, was sufficient as it stood by the present law.

Sir Francis Basset said, that he was not against the holding of public meetings, while they were held for constitutional purposes; but when they were held for purposes that were inimical to our Constitution, it became the business of Government to take care to bring the military for the purpose of suppressing tumults, if any should arise. On this day it was said, a meeting had been held that was perfectly orderly; if that was the case, certainly there could be no occasion for the military. The military, he believed, had never been unnecessarily called out on such occasions. He was sure they never would by any man deserving to be a Minister. But he did not agree with those who thought there was no connection between the meeting of Copenhagen House and the outrage that was offered to his Majesty. He had heard of words that were delivered at that place, which were dangerous in themselves, and still more so from the manner in which they were delivered. The words were these, "His gracious Majesty is to meet in Parliament on Thursday next, and I hope you will give him a warm reception." Now he would ask, in the language of common sense, if this was to be understood as applying to the applause which arose from attachment or zeal for his service; or for the purpose of con-

tumely; upon the real intent of it, he thought no man could doubt.

He then took notice of the riot act. That act was paffed without any inquiry, upon the notoriety of the cafe, that mifchief might arife which required the adoption of fuch provifions, as were fpecified in the claufes of that act. What was the fituation of the country at that time? There were fome perfons who were inimical to the King upon the throne. They wifhed to remove the King, and to put another upon the throne in his place. The danger apprehended at that time was nothing to that which was now to be dreaded. Had the family of Stuart been placed upon the throne, the whole of the Conftitution would not have been deftroyed; the property of every individual would not have been wrefted from him; perfonal diftinction would not have been facrificed; and fome fecurity would have remained for the form of our Government continuing. But, if the perfons engaged in thofe Societies fhould fucceed, there would be an end at once to the very form of our Conftitution. Indeed the mifchiefs of thefe clubs, which it was the object of the Bill to fupprefs, had long ftruck him fo forcibly, and alfo many country gentlemen like himfelf, that they thought the Minifter had been very remifs in not bringing forward fome fuch meafure as the prefent, long before this time, for the confideration of Parliament. There had been clubs for debates of queftions, the difcuffion of which he thought harmlefs; for inftance, "Whether Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox was the moft worthy man of the two?" In this he did not fee any thing of great confequence to the public. Another queftion, he remarked was, "Whether the prefent Minifters deferved the confidence of the people?"—This appeared alfo to him to be harmlefs. But when he read a queftion, which was a late one, "Whether the people ought to be in a ftate of rebellion, in confequence of a Convention Bill paffed by Parliament?" he owned he faw thefe Societies in a very different light from harmlefs meetings. Thefe perfons muft either allow Parliament to be a legal or an illegal affembly: if legal, they ought to exercife their authority over fuch daring debates; if illegal, there was an end at once of all their authority. The extent of the prefent Bill had been fo perfectly mifreprefented, that he did not wonder at what had been faid of it. Gentlemen had raifed phantoms in their own imaginations, and then had combated thofe phantoms with all the ferioufnefs of realities. It was ftated, that no public meeting could be held if this Bill paffed; furely the cafe was not fo. The one regulation only went to prevent meetings being held without an advertifement; and the other went to prevent debating focieties

ſocieties where money was to be taken. With reſpect to the firſt, what objection could there be to that regulation? County meetings, as he underſtood, generally are under that footing; and with regard to the idea, that the debate at ſuch a meeting could not be free, he owned he ſaw no reaſon to ſuſpect that; a Magiſtrate would not have power to ſuppreſs the meeting while the debate was fairly conducted, if he did, he was amenable to the law; but if ſome power be not given to prevent the diſcuſſion of ſome queſtions, ſuch as he had heard, he would venture to ſay that the Conſtitution of this country could not laſt for a year. He took notice of the caſe of thoſe who had been tried for high treaſon, and acquitted. He found no fault with their acquittal, for they might not have done that which the law denominated treaſon. But he muſt proteſt againſt what had been agitated to-night, with reſpect to juries. Gentlemen were too fond of praiſing juries, when their verdict ſuited the ſide which they took in politics, and too ready to depreciate the value of their deciſions, if a jury was againſt their opinions. Thus it had happened, that the verdict of Engliſh juries had been extolled, and the verdicts of the Scotch juries arraigned. This was, in his opinion, a daring conduct, and what he never heard carried to ſuch a length before this day. Gentlemen had ſaid a great deal with reſpect to coalitions of perſons of one and the other ſide of the Houſe; for his part he ſaw nothing improper in ſuch coalitions. The Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr Fox) had ſaid many ſevere things againſt a noble Lord, now no more, and yet they had afterwards coaleſced; he found no fault with them for it; on the contrary, he applauded them, for he believed they did ſo for the public intereſt; but ſurely it ought to be allowed, that thoſe who have lately joined, have done ſo from the ſame honourable motives. He concluded with obſerving, that he ſhould vote for the preſent Bill, and that he never gave a vote in his life more willingly, than that which he ſhould give to-night.

Mr. Fox explained what he meant, with regard to the Scotch caſes of ſedition;—he arraigned what he conceived the miſconduct of the Judges in the mode of conducting the trials. He arraigned the ſeverity of the ſentences, and above all, the manner in which they had been carried into execution by Engliſh Miniſters who ought to have better ideas of the adminiſtration of juſtice, and which ought to have been reprobated by Parliament.

The Secratary at War thanked Sir Francis Baſſet for the able manner in which he had taken up and diſcuſſed the queſtion; agreed with him as to the union of parties, and treated all inſinuations about intereſted motives with contempt. He took notice of the penſion that had been granted to Mr. Burke, whom he extolled

as the moſt enlightened man in Europe, and to whom a ſtatue of gold ought to be erected. He thought that Miniſters diſplayed their public ſpirit by granting him a penſion, as much of the labour of that great man had been exerted againſt themſelves. He thought that if ſuch a man as Mr. Burke had been left in that indigence in which the independence of his own great mind had ſo long kept him, it would have been a diſgrace to the country and the age in which he lived. He expreſſed reſentment at the manner in which that Gentleman had been talked of in his retirement, under the preſſure of his domeſtic affliction. He expected the public to venerate the character of ſo great a man, &c.

[He was called to order. He confeſſed he had indulged his feelings perhaps irregularly, but he hoped the Houſe would excuſe him.]

Mr. Curwen diſclaimed all ideas of perſonality againſt Mr. Burke; but maintained, that if ſuch a penſion ought to have been given to him, Miniſters ſhould have come to Parliament for that purpoſe.

Mr. Sheridan, in an animated reply to the ſeveral ſpeakers againſt his motion, commented on the ſupercilious tone with which the Secretary at War affected to treat every alluſion to the manner in which he and his friends had ſacrificed every principle they had ever profeſſed. It was certainly not a very unnatural thing for Gentlemen to aſſert that their conduct was ſomewhat equivocal, when they ſaw them ſquandering upon their adherents and relations the public money, in the moſt laviſh way, and accepting for themſelves places without power, buſineſs, and efficiency. He had this on the authority of the pamphlet publiſhed by one of themſelves, Earl Fitzwilliam, in which he affirmed, that the Duke of Portland had accepted of an office of a third Secretaryſhip, in violation of his own Bill, without either buſineſs or power—and in doing of which the had diſgraced and degraded himſelf. They might have ſhewn that their alarms were genuine, if they had given a diſintereſted ſupport to Government; and ſurely the Hon. Secretary, if he had recollected his own language, would not ſo readily have dreſſed himſelf out in "a rag of the filthy dowlas of the Right Hon. Gentleman." In regard to the penſion of Mr. Burke, he would not ſay one word of his merits, farther than to ſay, that no man deſerved better to enjoy a part of the public money, if penſions were at all to be given, ſince he had contributed ſo much to recommend the economy of the national caſh. But the manner, he contended, was diſgraceful, not only to the Gentleman himſelf, but to Miniſters. His own Bill had been evaded to grant him this penſion,

inſtead of coming for it fairly to Parliament. And it was diſgraceful to the Miniſter, ſince he had laid it upon a fund, which, ſome years ago, being too ſmall for the payment of certain annuities laid upon it, was eaſed of the old penſion to the family of Mr. Pitt, and of that to the Duke of Glouceſter, which were laid on the conſolidated fund. Now if the 4½ fund was ſufficient, the Public had a right to be reimburſed, inſtead of giving it away by new grants. Mr. Sheridan then animadverted on the way in which his queſtion had been met by the oppoſite ſide. They had given a vaſt number of aſſertions which they deſired the Houſe to take for granted. He would do no ſuch thing—he called on them for proof. An Hon. Baronet had related a groſs ſpeech, ſaid to be uttered at Copenhagen-Houſe. It was very groſs, and very improper—but was it ſpoken? A learned Gentleman had produced a number of papers ſaid to be bought at the ſhop of a Citizen Lee, whom he called Bookſeller to the London Correſponding Society. He believed that Citizen Lee was not the Bookſeller of the Correſponding Society. Let him be proved to be ſo. The Houſe had conſciences, as well as the Learned Gentleman, and they ought to be ſatisfied as well as he, by having the documents before them. He concluded with ſaying, that ſurely the Right Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Pitt, ought not to be the firſt to demoliſh debating ſocieties, who had profited ſo much from them; who had attended them ſo aſſiduouſly; and who had not only ſpoken in a maſk indeed, at theſe debating ſocieties, but had lent a helping hand to the inſtitution of one of them, the Lyceum, in the Strand. His ſpeech in a maſk, he perhaps might recollect. It was ſpoken at Carliſle Houſe, on the queſtion, "Whether the diſtinction was juſt, which divided all mankind into two claſſes, knaves and fools." What ſide the Right Hon. Gentleman had taken, he could not ſay. Perhaps no man could better illuſtrate the poſition, that a little political knavery, under the maſk of patriotiſm, might, for a long time, impoſe ſucceſsfully on the folly of Engliſhmen.

Mr. Chancellor Pitt roſe to explain. He ſaid, that ſome years ago, the 4½ per cent. fund had proved defective, owing to the iſlands being taken. The arrears of the penſions due upon the fund had been paid by the Public; but none, except the penſion of the Duke of Glouceſter, had been fixed on the conſolidated fund. The penſion in which his family were intereſted ſtill remained on the 4½ per cents.

The Houſe divided,

Againſt the motion 167; For it, 22; Majority 145.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

WESTMINSTER-MEETING, PALACE-YARD.

IN the memory of the oldeſt inhabitant of the city, there never were aſſembled upon any occaſion ſo immenſe a body of the people as yeſterday met in compliance with the requiſition ſigned by John Gregory, Eſq. It would be vain to attempt to give an eſtimate of the numbers, ſince it muſt be a mere effort of conjecture.

The huſtings were erected in Weſtminſter-Hall, early in the morning, ſo as to be pretty nearly finiſhed before the Courts met, and without giving them any interruption whatever. When Mr. Fox arrived at the King's-Arms Tavern, he mentioned that he had notes from the Chancellor and the Chief Juſtice of the Common Pleas, in anſwer to notes which he had written to them, upon the ſubject of having the Meeting in Weſtminſter-Hall. Thoſe notes ſignified a diſapprobation of holding the Meeting where the Courts were ſitting. By this time Lord Hood, Lord Belgrave, Mr. Ryder, and Mr. Jenkinſon were arrived, and upon the huſtings. A friend of Mr. Fox's went to thoſe gentlemen, to ſignify that it would be adviſeable, in conſequence of what the Chancellor and Chief Juſtice had ſaid, to remove the huſtings to Palace-yard, but that particular care ſhould be taken to accommodate them and their friends. General Tarleton then announced the removing of the huſtings and the cauſe of it; and in little more than an hour they were erected in the front of the King's-Arms Tavern, with every poſſible accommodation.

Mr. Fox, accompanied by the Duke of Bedford, the Earls of Derby and Lauderdale, Lord Robert Spencer, Mr. Sheridan, and a number of his friends, aſcended the huſtings; and Lord Hood, Lord Belgrave, Mr. Ryder, and his friends did the ſame.

The Right Honourable Charles James Fox was unanimouſly called to the Chair.

Mr. Fox then came forward, and was received by the loudeſt acclamations of the people. "A daring attempt," ſaid he, "has been made upon your liberties—an attempt to ſubvert the Conſtitution of England.—Bills have been brought into both Houſes of Parliament; one under the title of the better ſecuring his Majeſty's Perſon; another for preventing Seditious Meetings, and Aſſemblies. Theſe Bills, in effect, are intended to complete the overthrow of the Liberties of the People of England, to debaſe the character of Engliſhmen, and to put them on a footing with thoſe who know not what the Rights of Man are, and among whom Freedom is entirely unknown. In a word, the Bill of Rights is propoſed to be finally repealed, that you ſhall be reprived of the Right of Petitioning. It is true, indeed, as you are told, you may petition Parliament, but how are you to petition? With the approbation of a Magiſtrate you may petition, without it you cannot. If ſuch a meeting as this is attempted to be held, and any perſon ſhould be ſtanding where you obſerve me, and endeavouring to explain to you the object, a Magiſtrate may come, and ſay that the proceeding ſeems to him to be dangerous; he may diſſolve the Meeting, and if you perſiſt in

being

being together, he may put you under military execution. By another provision; if a Magistrate suspects that any meeting is to be held for the discussion of any political subject, and you pay money for your admission, he may attend, and he is to have power to disperse you, under the penalty of being treated as persons rioting in a disorderly house.—Thus are the people of England forbidden expressly from even discussing the conduct of their rulers. Ministers have involved you in an unnecessary war, which they have conducted to the disgrace of the British arms; for which they have heavily loaded you with taxes.—To this condition have they brought you; what could they have done more, but to forbid you to complain? They have attempted it: conscious of their own demerits, they think they cannot be safe, unless they can finally forbid you to state your own grievances.

The pretext of these Bills is, That the law, as it now stands, is insufficient to punish those who have been guilty of intercepting and insulting his Majesty in his passage to Parliament. I hope, that although that is not, in strictness, the object of this meeting, you will nevertheless express, before you separate, your abhorrence of those disgraceful acts by which his Majesty was insulted; acts which we all equally detest and all equally lament. This has been used as a pretext for these Bills, which are intended to deprive you of all your freedom; but it is the policy of bad men to join, whenever they can, their bad measures with the name of the Sovereign whom we all love, and are equally bound and determined to protect. But I am sure that, because we have the worst of Ministers, that shall not prevent you from declaring we have the best of Sovereigns. I have now nothing more to do but to take the Chair at this Meeting, and to conduct myself with impartiality."

This speech being heard with profound attention, was followed by loud and reiterated tokens of the most sincere esteem and heart-felt satisfaction.

The Duke of Bedford then came forward, and was received, like Mr. Fox, with the most distinguishing marks of the affection of the people. When the applause had subsided, the noble Duke addressed the company to the following effect:

" On what you have heard, it will not be necessary for me to trouble you at great length. However, I shall say a few words on the measures which I shall propose to you to adopt, in consequence of the two Bills which have been so well explained to you by Mr. Fox. I must call to your recollection the transactions which have given rise to them. I am sure you must feel, as I do, the utmost horror at the outrage which was offered to his Majesty, and I am sure that you would join with me in using your utmost endeavours to bring to punishment those who have been guilty of that atrocious act; I am sure you would join with me in assenting to any Act that would better secure the safety of our Sovereign; but thank God, the law is sufficient for that purpose. But while we are thus lamenting the outrage that was offered to his Majesty, and while Ministers are affecting so much alarm upon it, they themselves are committing a still more daring outrage against the Liberties of the People, and the most valuable parts of our Constitution.

Two Bills have been brought into Parliament, both of them avowedly for extending the criminal law, at a time when every other nation is diminishing it. These Bills likewise enact new punishments for Misdemeanor—barbarous punishments, never before heard of in England; and at the same time this is expressed in such ambiguous words, as to enable the Minister to

punish

punish us, whenever he pleases, for our opinions. The other Bill goes still further, for it strikes immediately at the very root of our liberties, and the most valuable part of our Constitution. I say it strikes at our Constitution, for it strikes at the very rights which you are now exercising, for if that Bill was passed, a Magistrate might declare that he was of opinion this was a seditious meeting, and it would be in his power to arrest me for speaking to you, and dissolve the meeting. If, conscious of the purity of your intention, you should attempt to debate afterwards, he would have power to subject you to all the horrors of military execution. In opposition to these odious principles, I say you have a right to meet; you have a right to petition; you have a right to remonstrate against all public measures that appear to you to be injurious to your interests. It is an undeniable and a sacred right, transmitted to you by your ancestors; by them claimed, demanded, and insisted upon, and solemnly assented to from the Throne itself, and in the most formal manner acknowledged as an undeniable right.

You have heard Ministers rail at innovations whenever any attempt has been made to prevent abuses. You now see, on the part of these very Ministers themselves, not an attempt at a reformation, but a direct attempt at a Revolution, a direct daring attempt to destroy the very essence of the constitution of England; for what will become of the fabric if the foundation be destroyed? In what manner then are we to resist this barefaced attempt to deprive us of our rights? I say, by exerting with energy the Right of Petition, while it yet remains, and which, by exercising, you will give to the rest of the country a good example. You should shew by your resistance that you abominate the law which has for its object the destruction of your liberty. Do it firmly. Do it collectively. Do it calmly, but do it decidedly; and then will you shew those bold invaders of your liberties, that you will not submit to them; then will you make the leader of this attack upon your freedom shake, while he is surrounded by his own satellites. You will make him see you feel these attacks on your inviolable Rights—Rights so interwoven with our constitution, that if it be criminal in him to invade, it would be doubly criminal in you to resign them. I shall therefore propose to you a Petition to the House of Commons, and an Address to his Majesty; but, as I feel myself exhausted, I shall desire a friend of mine to read them to you."

This address was followed by the warmest and lasting applause.

Mr. Grey then read the Petition, which was highly approved of by the people, and which is to the following effect. It was seconded by Mr. Harry House, the father of Westminster.

"Sheweth,

That a Bill has been brought into your Honourable House, subversive of the liberties which the people of this kingdom, at the period when they transferred the Crown of England to the illustrious family upon the throne, did claim, demand, and insist upon, as their true, ancient, and indubitable rights.

That the said Bill is entituled "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies."

That the only mode by which your Petitioners and the people of Great Britain can express their sentiments, and make their grievances known, is by meeting together, either to instruct their Representatives, to petition Parliament, or to address the King. This is their privilege, and subject to the

the exifting laws, which have already provided againft the abufe of it: Your Petitioners do, in the language of their forefathers, claim, demand, and infift upon the free exercife of it, as their true, ancient, and indubitable right. The allowance and encouragement of free, honeft, and open difcuffion of all matters, political and judicial, while it has afforded the fureft control upon the encroachments of the Executive Government, has tended moft effectually to fecure the upright adminiftration of juftice.

Your Honourable Houfe is humbly reminded, that the right of the people to fuch meetings is the beft fecurity they poffefs againft the abufe of power. If they who are delegated to defend their liberties bafely or corruptly betray them; if they who are fent to watch over Minifters become their accomplices, what may the people do if they may not remonftrate?

By the Bill now depending no meeting can be called except with the knowledge of a magiftrate, whofe prefence is made neceffary, not merely for the prefervation of the peace, but for the purpofe of controling the fentiments to be uttered. He is conftituted fole judge of the manner in which a grievance may be ftated, or a right afferted. To differ with him in political opinion is made a breach of the peace; to maintain that opinion is made a riot; and to perfift in it is to incur the horrors of military execution. We truft your Honourable Houfe will feel a proper degree of refentment againft the principle of fuch a Bill, as affecting the whole mafs of the people; but we, as inhabitants of Weftminfter, ftand more efpecially in need of your protection. It is our peculiar fate to be fuperintended by magiftrates, who are felected, employed, and paid during pleafure by the Executive Power.

Your Petitioners further beg leave to call the attention of your Honourable Houfe to a Bill now depending, entitled "An Act for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government, againft Treafonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts."

They humbly reprefent that this Bill contains an arbitrary accumulation of treafons, calculated to harrafs and opprefs the fubject without adding any fecurity to the perfon of his Majefty: that it alfo defcribes the mifdemeanor at which another of its claufes is pointed with fuch ftudied ambiguity, as to comprehend, in its penal operation, every exercife of the right of examining public affairs, and that this mifdemeanor, fo defcribed, is fubject to a barbarous punifhment, which, as applied to fuch offence, is utterly unknown to the mild and merciful fpirit of the law of England.

Under all thefe circumftances, your Petitioners, deeply impreffed with a fenfe of the dangers which impend over the peace and conftitution of their country, moft earneftly implore your Honourable Houfe to avert them, by the rejection of meafures, which, by depriving the people of their moft ancient and indubitable rights, have a tendency to alienate their affections from the conftitution, and to leffen their refpect for the laws."

Lord Hood then came forward, and on his fignifying a defire to be heard, the people were filent.

His Lordfhip proceeded. The fubftance of his Addrefs (as far as we could recollect what he faid, for he fpoke in a low tone, and indiftinctly) was, That he thought great mifreprefentations of the Bill had gone abroad. That, as one of the Reprefentatives of the city of Weftminfter, he muft proteft againft any determination which the prefent meeting might come to,

upon

upon the ſubject of a Petition, in the name of the inhabitants of the city of Weſtminſter; becauſe he could not conſider any meeting entitled to that name, that was not compoſed of thoſe only who were the real Electors of that city, aſcertained by the books of the different pariſhes. He thought that the only way to know the real ſentiments of the inhabitants of Weſtminſter would be, that of taking the ſenſe of the people in every individual pariſh, and to add their addreſſes to their names.

There were ſome marks of diſapprobation after this addreſs; but they ſubſided ſoon.

Mr. Sheridan then came forward, and was moſt cordially received. He proceeded nearly as follows;

" There is no event that could juſtify the intentions of the preſent meeting, more than the very patient hearing which you have been ſo generous as to give the noble Lord who has juſt addreſſed you; nor could any thing have contributed more to the diſappointment of your enemies than the decorum you have obſerved; becauſe they want to reproach you with a ſpirit of tumult and of riot, and to ſay, here is no impartiality, for here are not to be heard thoſe who have a deſire to collect the voices of the virtuous part of the people. I ſay, by your demeanour, you have defeated their endeavours to ſow diſcontent among you; for after the extraordinary manner you have liſtened to a ſpeech, the moſt extraordinary that ever was delivered to ſo large a body of the people, and that too by a noble Lord who pretends to be concerned for your intereſts, you have proved yourſelves worthy of what your oppreſſors are endeavouring to deprive you, namely, a right to meet and expreſs your ſentiments on public affairs.

The noble Lord ſays, he came not to argue here, but to proteſt againſt the meeting. This is a ſample of what you are to expect hereafter. It is lucky the Bill has not been paſſed, for, if it had, the noble Lord would not have proteſted againſt the Meeting, he would have been here to knock you down. He ſays he does not know who are, and who are not inhabitants of the city of Weſtminſter. I underſtand the noble Lord; he means he cannot get the ſenſe of the people of Weſtminſter without a ſcrutiny. I know the Court influence that will be introduced, and the terror that will be employed againſt any tradeſman who ſhall dare to put his name againſt the ſentiments of the noble Lord. Another circumſtance worth attending to is this—that, according to the proceſs which his Lordſhip recommends, you will have nothing to do when you meet; for, before the noble Lord ſhall have been ſatisfied of the ſenſe of the inhabitants of Weſtminſter, the Bill will have paſſed: for I remember that, in the progreſs of the laſt enquiry, which the noble Lord inſtituted, the Parliament was nearly over before there was an end of the ſcrutiny.

With regard to the Bills themſelves, after what has been ſaid by Mr. Fox and the Duke of Bedford, it would be ſuperfluous in me to ſay much. Indeed any comment on them to any man who has heard of them, or who has heard the ſpirit of them, would be an inſult to his underſtanding. You have underſtandings, and it requires nothing but common ſenſe and common feeling to hold in execration the Bills and the authors of them. The pretence of the Bills is to prevent the Government of this country from coming into hatred and contempt. If they had their true title they would have been called " Bills to bring the Government of England into hatred and contempt." The pretence for all theſe meaſures has been the outrage which

we

we all deplore, that was offered to his Majefty in his way to Parliament; But is there one man here who believes that was the origin of thefe Bills? No! no! they have been long prepared. Minifters waited for a pretence to introduce a fyftem of flavery. If there had not been one, I know they are capable of making one. The truth is, the people of England are too loyal and patient for the Minifter's purpofes, and this they were obliged to confefs on the firft day of the prefent Seffion of Parliament. His Majefty tells us from the throne that the people are fubmiffive to the law: and fo they are—for, although they have juft efcaped from one famine, and now have the profpect of another, ftill they are fubmiffive to the law. The Minifter pretends to fay he will provide them with corn; but now, inftead of giving them bread, he endeavours to clofe up their mouths by terror.

There are perfons whofe intereft it is to promote tumult and fedition, and that is a fund for fpies and informers, for if there were not fomething of that fort to talk of, they would not live. Sedition is their prey, perjury their practice, and bribes and promifes their wages! Spies and informers;—Oh!—No, I beg pardon; they are no more than Minifterial Reporters for the defence of Government. I have no doubt that we have here at this moment a pretty tolerable fprinkling of them. I wifh them to report faithfully the proceedings of this day. The refult will be this; that by this meeting two things are clear; that they can never fucceed in attempting to make an Englifh jury contemptible, and fpies reputable.

Anothing thing which is very important to Weftminfter, which I wifh to obferve, is this. Our magiftrates are not as they are in other places; for they are dependent on the Government. I do not mean to reflect on any body of men. Some of them may be refpectable; others I do not know much of, and defire to know no more; but we have a right to regard them with Conftitutional jealoufy. If a meeting is held of the inhabitants of Weftminfter, they will judge of you according to the character given of you by the Minifter, who is their employer; of courfe his Worfhip will never come among you but with a guard of foldiers. They will come to put you to military execution, and when they have gone through their good fervice, they will go with their bayonets, wafhed with the blood of their countrymen, to receive their wages at the Treafury!

I have only one word more, which is indeed unneceffary—it is to requeft you to conduct yourfelves with decorum, and, when the bufinefs of the meeting is over, to feparate peaceably, and to fhew that large affemblies of the people can be peaceable. You will refpect the law for your own honour and for your own fafety; and I will add, that I believe, bold as it is now to affert it, the day will come, when the law, weak as it is faid to be at prefent, will be found ftrong enough to bring to the fcaffold your corrupt oppreffors."

This fpeech was followed by prodigious applaufe.

Mr. Fox—I have nothing to add, but congratulations to this affembly and to the country at large, and to obferve that there are, at leaft in Weftminfter, fome who know their rights, and who are determined, by peaceable means, to defend them. This I am fure, and from your knowledge of me you cannot doubt it—I am ready to obey your commands, and to fecond all your efforts to obtain your rights.

The time has been, when part of my conduct has not been equally agreeable to the majority of my conftituents; but when that was the cafe, did I

endeavour

endeavour to prevent popular meetings? I ſhall add no more than to repeat to you, that the ſpirit of the Bills I have mentioned to you, is to prevent all popular diſcuſſion whatever; this right is not a part only, but may be ſaid to be the very foundation, and the corner-ſtone of our conſtitution. I ſhall now proceed to put the Petition to the vote.

The queſtion being put, for thoſe who agreed to the Petition to hold up their hands, the whole company in a maſs immediately held up their hands.

Mr. Fox obſerved, that from the number of perſons who approved of the Petition he thought there could be but very few againſt it. However, it was fair to put the queſtion on the other ſide, which he did, by deſiring thoſe who were againſt it to hold up their hands.

Mr. Fox ſaid the Petition was carried, and only two diſſentient perſons in the whole aſſembly.

This declaration was followed by long and laſting applauſe.

The Duke of Bbedford came again forward, and proceeded nearly as follows:

Having already addreſſed you on a Petition which you have now adopted, it is unneceſſary for me to ſay any thing further than that your conduct is particularly gratifying to me. What I am now going to offer I hope will be agreed to, even without the diſſent of the two unfortunate individuals who oppoſed the Petition. I ſhall here, without any further obſervations, propoſe an Addreſs to his Majeſty.

Here the noble Duke read an Addreſs to his Majeſty, congratulating his Majeſty on his eſcape, and expreſſing the abhorrence of the Aſſembly at the outrage which had been offered to him, &c.

Mr. Fox put the queſtion, that this Addreſs be preſented to his Majeſty, which was carried without a diſſenting voice.

The Duke of Bedford propoſed that the Addreſs be preſented to his Majeſty, and the Petition be preſented to the Houſe of Commons, by Mr. Fox.

The company agreed to this unanimouſly, and pretty vehemently inſiſted that Lord Hood ſhould have nothing to do with the Addreſs.

Mr. Fox came forward again and ſaid—It would ill become me to expreſs, by many words, my thanks for your favours, and the confidence you repoſe in me. I hope I ſhall faithfully execute your commands. I am ſure his Majeſty will receive your ſentiments of attachment to him with his uſual graciouſneſs. But I muſt tell you plainly, that when I come to preſent your Petition to the Houſe of Commons, ſtrange as it may ſeem to you, I will venture to prophecy, that although your meeting is in the very city of Weſtminſter, although you are at this moment within a few yards of the Houſe of Commons, I ſhall be told there that the Bill which you have been juſt now execrating meets with the general concurrence of the people. I think I have now authority to give a poſitive contradiction to that aſſertion.

Lord Mountmorres gave his hearty diſapprobation of the Bill againſt which the company had voted a Petition, and expreſſed great indignation at the late attempt on his Majeſty; he applauded the Addreſs which the company had voted upon that ſubject. He cenſured very highly the conduct of Miniſters in the proſecution of this war. Accuſed them of negligence with regard to the condition of the poor in conſequence of the high price of food. As there were miniſterial Reporters preſent, he hoped they would

would do him the honour to convey the ſubſtance of what he now ſaid to their employers.

Lord Lauderdale propoſed the thanks of the Meeting to Mr. Fox, which was inſtantaneouſly voted by acclamation.

Mr. Fox. There are ſeveral copies of the Petition now lying at the King's Arms Tavern for ſignatures, and other places, of which notice will be given. And now I think we ſhould adjourn. [Peace! Peace! Peace! was then pronounced by a vaſt number of voices.]

Mr. Fox proceeded. It has been ſuggeſted to me there is another Petition now lying for ſignatures, which is intended to entrap the unwary. It is a Petition contrary to this. How it is worded I do not know. Indiſtinctly, I believe, but it is in effect a *Petition for Slavery!* Beware of it:—I hear a pretty general wiſh to addreſs his Majeſty and Parliament on the ſubject of Peace. All I can ſay is that I ſhall attend with pleaſure and ſatisfaction any meeting for that purpoſe. From me you ſhall have every ſupport that I can give. You have a right to demand it of me. And now I propoſe that we ſhould adjourn, and that our triumph may be complete, I truſt you will all return peaceably to your homes.

The queſtion of Adjournment was then put, and agreed to with unanimity. We never witneſſed a meeting of near 10 or 12,000 men, where order, regularity and decorum were more perfectly obſerved. The effect of this conduct in a multitude that ſpread in every direction as far as the eye could reach, was truly impreſſive. When they held up their hands to ſignify their approbation, nothing could be more intereſting than the ſight. The reader may imagine the animating ſcene when ſo many thouſands of men ſtretched aloft their hands in ſolemn ſupport of a Petition upon the iſſue of which every thing ſacred in life depended. The ſky was rent with the acclamation of their conſent, and having thus expreſſed their feelings, upon every queſtion as it was put, they returned again to the ſame attentive ſilence, which they maintained while every one of the noble and honourable perſons who addreſſed them were ſpeaking. If ever a meeting teſtified the heartfelt ſenſe and conviction of the City of Weſtminſter, it was the meeting of yeſterday. Their conduct, like their numbers, was equal to the occaſion which drew them forth. Many of them being eager to ſign the Petition forthwith, they crouded round the copies which had been prepared, and ſeveral thouſands ſigned the Petition on the ſpot. Others crouded round their upright and invaluable Repreſentative, Mr. Fox, and it was in vain for him to reſiſt their importunities. He was hurried into a coach along with the Duke of Bedford, Mr. Sheridan, and another friend or two.

They then drew him through Pall-Mall, Saint James's-ſtreet, Piccadilly, Berkeley-ſquare, and Hill-ſtreet, to Mr. Fox's houſe in South-ſtreet. The applauſe was extreme—but there was not an inſulting expreſſion offered at any place or to any perſon. As ſoon as Mr. Fox got into his houſe, he addreſſed them from the window in a very few words, and requeſted them to be ſatisfied with the triumph of the day, that they had proved their love of the conſtitution and their obedience to the laws, by the moderation, firmneſs, good order, and good ſenſe with which they had conducted themſelves. He deſired them to continue to act upon thoſe principles, to diſperſe immediately, and retire peaceably to their homes, for that the enemies of liberty and conſtitutional rights of the people could have no triumph but in the poſſibility of taking advantage of any indiſcreet manifeſtation of their zeal.

In

In ten minutes the ftreet was completely cleared, and all that numerous body of people retired with a tranquillity and good order that was hardly equalled, and never exceeded.

[*As the preceding account may be deemed partial, we fhall lay the following before our readers, copied from a Newfpaper in the immediate fervice of perfons connected with Government; which account approaches neareft to the truth, it left for the determination of our readers, who may judge by internal evidence, or other circumftances.*]

MEETING IN PALACE-YARD, Nov. 17.

YESTERDAY, in confequence of an advertifement in the different papers, figned by a man of the name of GREGORY (a bricklayer, in *Piccadilly*) a large mob affembled in Palace-yard, Weftminfter; it being found that fo tumultuous a meeting in Weftminfter-hall would neceffarily interrupt the bufinefs in the different Courts of Juftice, which were then fitting.

As foon as a *fcaffold* was raifed, Mr. FOX afcended it, accompanied by the DUKE of BEDFORD, Mr. SHERIDAN, Mr. GREY, LORD LAUDERDALE, &c.

MR. FOX, the Hero of the Day, opened the bufinefs by a fpeech, in which the fame mifreprefentations and perverfions were ufed, with regard to the Bill now before Parliament, as he and his affociates had ufed elfewhere, and as THELWALL and his gang had employed at *Copenhagen-Houfe*. Appeals to the paffions of the multitude were, of courfe, not forgotten.—He was followed by the Duke of BEDFORD, who went over the fame ground, *as well as he could*, and after ftammering for fome time, complained of being exhaufted (in argument, no doubt) when the *mild*, the *moderate*, the *patient* Mr. GREY, advanced upon the *fcaffold*, and read a Petition to the Houfe of Commons, which was voted *a la Françoife*, by acclamation, it not being poffible for one man in a hundred, who fhould applaud, to hear a fyllable of its contents.—Mr. GREY'S motion was feconded by the old dotard, HARRY HOUSE, whofe *oily* tongue is well known in every porter-houfe in the City of Weftminfter.

Lord HOOD, conceiving it to be his duty to ftand forward on fuch an occafion, addreffed the multitude in a plain, manly, and fenfible fpeech: he faid, "That he and many refpectable inhabitants of Weftminfter came there, not to difcufs the merits or demerits of the Bill in queftion, but to enter their proteft againft the proceedings: That he, and thofe who agreed with him in thinking, that fome fuch meafure was abfolutely neceffary for the prefervation of public tranquillity, and of the CONSTITUTION itfelf, were at leaft as anxious as thofe who oppofed it could be, that the real fenfe of the abfent houfe-keepers of Weftminfter fhould be fairly taken upon it: That the groffeft mifreprefentations of the Bill had been induftrioufly circulated, which he did not think it neceffary on that occafion to reply to; but that he earneftly recommended it to the inhabitants, houfeholders of Weftminfter, to have meetings, as foon as poffible, at their refpective veftries, where their opinions might be fairly and legally taken, and where they might refpectively fign their names, and write down the places of their refidence.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding Citizen SHERIDAN'S resolution of *Sunday*, that "the most *peaceable*, *equal*, and *impartial* hearing," should be extended to all parties, this sensible speech, which must have incurred the unanimous approbation and concurrence of all *honest* and *upright* men, who really wished to ascertain the true sense of the city, was interrupted by the groans and hisses of Mr. Fox's friends, and the hired mob by which they were surrounded.

Mr. SHERIDAN, the "tattling, prattling member for the *independent* Borough of *Stafford*," next stepped forward, and commented, with his accustomed *accuracy* and *liberality*, on the speech of the worthy veteran, who had been more used to fight *for* his country, than to prate *against* her true interests. His *assertions*, with regard to the Bill, we forbear to notice, as we wish not to disgrace our page by a breach of decorum and good manners; and were we to characterize those assertions, we should certainly be accused of such a breach.

Mr. FOX next undertook the *Herculean* task of defending his political conduct in a *cursory* manner, carefully omitting all reference to his *coalition* with Lord NORTH, when he had been repeatedly threatened with the *scaffold*; to his reprobation of *any* kind of connection with the French, in the debates on the Commercial Treaty; and to his unqualified admiration of "that stupendous monument of Human Happiness and Human Wisdom," the French Revolution!

The Duke of BEDFORD having, by this time, recovered from the *excess* of *fatigue*, which he had experienced, again came forward, and moved—*mirabile dictu!* a Loyal Address, from the same motive that leads Apothecaries to gild and perfume their nauseous pills. Fearful lest his worthy friends from *Copenhagen House*, who were all there, might not digest this dose, he prudently averted all comment, by a sagacious observation, that such an Address was a matter of course.

Lords MOUNTMORRES and LAUDERDALE successively harangued the multitude; and the latter, with his usual strength of *argument*, and display of *modesty*, moved the Thanks of the Crowd to Citizen Fox, which motion was, of course, carried by acclamation.

This encouraged Mr. Fox, whose heroism, like that of his *Gallic* friends, is ever most ardent when least opposed, to observe, that it appeared—an appearance, by the bye, confined to himself—to be the wish of the *Gentlemen* present to hold a meeting to petition for a speedy peace; a meeting, which he pledged himself to attend—he then adjourned the motly Assembly.

It is almost needless to say, that the meeting was attended by a much greater number of the vagabonds of the Corresponding and other Seditious Societies, than of the real inhabitants of Westminster.

On the conclusion of this indecent business in Palace-yard, the Duke of BEDFORD, Mr. FOX, and Mr. SHERIDAN (we did not see THELWALL with them) walked away amid a set of dirty ruffians, whose acclamations were exactly fitted to complete *the triumph of such a day*. The *patriotic triumvirate*, seeming to have had *enough* of the company of their *political companions*, took a hackney coach at Charing Cross. The ruffians here unloosed the horses, and dragged the carriage through Pall-Pall, up to the *Gaming-House* in St. James's-street.

 [N. B.—The

[N. B.—The above ſketch of Lord Hood's ſpeech was afterwards printed in the Newſpapers in the form of an Advertiſement, with the following addition—" His Lordſhip, though ſurrounded by a hoſtile mob, was liſtened to, and received, with all the reſpect and attention which his ſervices and character ſo eminently deſerve."]

At a moſt numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City and Liberty of WESTMINSTER, held in Palace-yard,

The Right Hon. C. J. FOX in the CHAIR,

A PETITION to the Houſe of Commons againſt the paſſing of the two Bills now before Parliament, viz. " An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," And " An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, againſt Treaſonable Practices and Attempts;" was moved by the Duke of BEDFORD, and ſeconded by HARRY HOUSE, Eſq. the Father of Weſtminſter, and carried with only TWO diſſenting voices.

An Addreſs to his Majeſty, congratulating him on his happy eſcape from the late abominable outrage upon his Perſon, in his paſſage to Parliament, was alſo moved by the Duke of BEDFORD, voted Nemine Contradicente, and ordered to be preſented by the Chairman.

By Order of the Meeting.

(Signed) C. J. FOX.

Mr. Fox having left the Chair, the Thanks of the Meeting was unanimouſly voted to him, for his very impartial conduct in the Chair.

November 16.

SHAKESPEARE TAVERN.

THE Petition agreed upon at the General Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City and Liberty of Weſtminſter, held this day, in Palace Yard, lies for additional ſignatures at the following places, viz.

The Shakeſpeare Tavern, Covent-Garden.
The Crown and Anchor, Strand.
The St. Alban's, St. Alban's-ſtreet.
The King's Arms, Palace Yard.
The Globe, in Craven-ſtreet.
At Thomas's Tavern, Dover-ſtreet.
At Wright's Tavern, Soho-ſquare.
And at the Gun Tavern, Pimlico.

WARD OF CHEAP.

(COPY.)

To the Worſhipful JOHN BOYDELL, Eſq. Alderman of the Ward of Cheap.

SIR,

WE, the Inhabitants of the Ward of Cheap, requeſt your Worſhip to ſummon a Ward Meeting of all the Inhabitants, to conſider of the propriety of petitioning Parliament, or the King, not to paſs into a law certain Bills

lately

lately introduced into both Houfes of Parliament, which we conceive to be unneceffary, and injurious to the liberty and fafety of the fubject.

Cheap Ward, [Signed by a great number of
November 13, 1795. refpectable inhabitants.]

In purfuance of the above requeft, I appoint a Ward Meeting of the Ward of Cheap, to be held on Thurfday next, the 19th inftant, at St. Lawrence's Church, in Cateaton-ftreet, at Eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

Cheapfide, JOHN BOYDELL, Ald.
November 16, 1795.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,

THE vigorous ftep which the Whig Club has taken to roufe the public mind to a a contemplation of the meafures now in agitation in the Houfe of Commons, having incurred the public animadverfion of the Treafury Prints, we infert a copy of the manufcript which is figned by the following perfons, as well as by many hundreds more, members of that Club. The public will then judge whether the conduct of that Club, or the conduct of his Majefty's Minifters, is moft confonant to the conftitutional Government of this country, as compofed of King, Lords, and Commons.

" We do folemnly pledge ourfelves to fupport the conftitution of this " country, according to the principles eftablifhed at the Revolution."

SIGNED,

Serj. Adair,
Lord Albermarle,
J. Anftruther, M. P.
S. J. Aubrey, M. P.
W. Baker, M. P.
R. F. Parkham, M. P.
S. C. Barrow, M. P.
Duke of Bedford,
Lord Ed. Bentinck,
Capt. W. Bentinck,
Lord Wm. Bentinck,
Mr. Cha. Bentinck,
Wilfon Bradyll, M. P.
S. H. Bridgeman, M. P.
Mr. O. Bridgeman, M. P.
Laur. Brown, M. P.
Earl Buckinghamfhire,
Sir Cha. Bunbury, M. P.
J. R. Burch, M. P.
Lord Carbery,
Lord John Cavendifh,
Lord Frederic Cavendifh,
Lord G. H. Cavendifh,
Lord George Cavendifh,
Lord Cholmondely,
Sir Robert Clayton,
Lord Downe,
Lord Befboro',
Lord Auckland,
Sir Gilbert Elliott,
Lord Faulkland,
Lord Fielding,
Lord Edward Fitzgerald,
Lord Fitzwilliam,
Lord Guildford,
Lord Inchiquin,
Lord Kinnoul,
J. Lambton, M. P.
Lord Ludlow,
Lord Maynard,
Lord Malden,
Duke of Manchefter,
Lord Milton,
Duke of Norfolk,
Lord Offory,
Dr. Parr,
Lord Plymouth,
Duke Portland,
Mr. Powlett, M. P.
Lord John Ruffell,
Lord Wm. Ruffell,
Lord Rob. Spencer,

Mr. Coke,
Lord Cork,
Lord Derby,
Duke of Devonſhire,
Lord Stamford,
Marquis Titchfield,
Lord John Townſhend,
Lord Cha. Townſhend.

To THOMAS TURTON, Eſquire, Sheriff of the County of Surry.

WE, whoſe names are hereunto ſet, Freeholders of the County of Surry, do hereby requeſt you to call a Public Meeting, to be held at the Spread Eagle, in Epſom, in and for the ſaid County, on Friday next, at Twelve o'clock, for the purpoſe of conſidering the propriety of petitioning Parliament againſt the paſſing certain Bills now depending therein; the one purporting to be an Act for the Safety of his Majeſty's Crown and Government againſt Treaſonable Practices and Attempts, and the other for preventing Seditious Meetings; and alſo to conſider of an humble Petition to his Majeſty, praying that his Majeſty will be graciouſly pleaſed to order proper ſteps to be taken for opening an immediate negociation for Peace.

W. Ruſſel,
Thomas Page,
John Nicholls,
James Trecothick,
Charles Terry,
George Smith,
John Pollard,
Law. Porter,
Ch. L. Moody.

Epſom,
Nov. 16*th*, 1795.

In compliance with the above Requiſition, I do hereby appoint the ſaid Meeting to be held on Friday next, the 20th inſt. at the Spread Eagle, Epſom, at Twelve o'clock.

Starboro' Caſtle,
Nov. 16*th*, 1795.

THO. TURTON, Sheriff.

SURRY.

Epſom, Nov. 16, 1795.

A Requiſition having been made to the Sheriff of this County, to call a Meeting at this place on Friday next, the 20th inſtant, at Twelve o'clock, to conſider of the propriety of a Petition to Parliament againſt the Bills now depending for the Safety of his Majeſty's Crown and Government, and for the Prevention of Seditious Meetings; as alſo of a Petition to his Majeſty to order proper ſteps to be taken for an immediate peace, the Landed and Funded Property of this County, who may ſee the impropriety of ſuch Petitions, are earneſtly deſired to attend and give their ſentiments on this very important occaſion, in which our deareſt intereſts are concerned.

November 13.

WE, the underſigned Freeholders of the County of Middleſex, requeſt you will call a Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of this County on an early day, for the purpoſe of taking into conſideration the propriety of a Petition to the Legiſlature againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament, ſeverally intituled—" An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices

Practices and Attempts," and "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies."

Norfolk, E. M.	J. Richardson,
Bedford,	George Barclay,
Northumberland,	H. C. Combe,
Lansdowne,	H. Smithers,
Guilford,	R. Evans,
Th. Ch. Crespigny,	E. Hall,
J. B. Church,	J. Gregory,
John Scott,	Jos. Thompson,
Thomas Scott,	C. Coulthurst,
J. Phillips,	H. S. Hargraves.

London, Nov. 17.

The above Requisition having been delivered to us, we do, in pursuance thereof, appoint a Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Middlesex to be held at the Mermaid Tavern, at Hackney, in the said County, on Saturday next (the 21st inst.) at Twelve o'clock, for the purposes specified in the said Requisition.

RICH. GLODE, JOHN LIPTRAP, } SHERIFFS.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, NOV. 17.

PETITIONS from the corporation of the city of Bath, and from the town of Great Yarmouth, expressing their detestation of the Seditious Meetings which had been held in different parts of the country, and praying the House to adopt such measures as they might see proper for putting a stop to the disorder, were presented, and order to lie on the table.

MR. DUNDAS presented a Petition from the Lord Provost and Magistrates of the City of Edinburgh, of a similar import, which was ordered to lie on the table.

Upon the question of the second reading of the Bill for the better preventing Seditious Assemblies,

THE SOLICITOR GENERAL (Sir John Mitford) said, that he would not have presumed to have obtruded himself upon the attention of the House in this stage of the Bill, did not the general interest it had excited, and the misrepresentations of its tendency which had taken place, render an explanation of its principle and object peculiarly important and necessary. The first object to which it was directed was the putting a stop to those meetings, which had of late been so frequently held. The sacred freedom of

of ſpeech, the privilege of which was juſtly reckoned ſo diſtinguiſhed a bleſſing of the Britiſh Conſtitution, had, he ſaid, been ſhamefully and dangerouſly abuſed. The ſincere friends of the Conſtitution and of the privileges it beſtowed, would, he was perſuaded, give their cordial ſupport to a meaſure which profeſſed to furniſh a remedy to that diſorder and abuſe. Whether the proviſions of the Bill were calculated to meet the evil and to accompliſh its purpoſe, was another conſideration. Its object, however, was to prevent the perverſion of an important right, and to ſuperſede the neceſſity of ſtronger reſtrictions upon it than the Bill was meant to impoſe.

The ſecond part was intended to remedy the abuſe of debating in public meetings. The particular object of this was, he ſaid, to prevent the egregious abuſe of that privilege which had of late riſen to ſo extraordinary a height—to prevent private intereſt from prompting diſcuſſions of public grievances, and to put a ſtop to that traffick by which an uncandid and unfair examination of abuſes, a turbulent ſpirit of diſcontent, had been raiſed and encouraged to ſerve the pecuniary purpoſes of individuals. It was to be conſidered afterwards how far this clauſe was ſuited to this purpoſe; ſo far it would ſurely be admitted that the object of it was proper.

When the Bill was examined it would be found that if the proviſions of it were defective at all, the fault was, that they did not go far enough. His own opinion was that they did not go ſo far, nor were ſo extenſive in their operations as they ought to have been. The framers of the Bill, however, had been guided by the beſt of motives. They wiſhed it to meet the evils againſt which it was levelled, and that the grand purpoſe would be atchieved by it, that of giving a timely check to the deſperate and incendiary views of theſe clubs and ſocieties. With regard to the principle of the firſt part, the Bill went to eſtabliſh the right to meet for the purpoſe of petitioning the Legiſlature againſt any exiſting law, or conſidering any actual grievance, but to ſubject it to regulations, not to withdraw or impair it. It enacted that no meeting for ſuch purpoſes could be held without a certain degree of previous notice. The perſons at whoſe requeſt it was called, would incur ſome degree of reſponſibility for the purpoſes purſued, and the conduct obſerved at ſuch meeting. He ſtated the exceptions of the Bill. It was not meant to comprehend any meeting called by the Lord Lieutenant, Sheriff, *Cuſtos Rotulorum*, &c. It did not attempt to interfere with that kind of meeting which had generally

been

been held formerly in this country, for the conſtitutional purpoſes alluded to, and which were the only meetings fitted for the exerciſe of theſe privileges. Whether this exception went far enough was, in his mind, a matter of doubt. The Bill ſimply required that previous notice ſhould be given for the purpoſe of explaining what is the nature of the buſineſs for which the meeting is called, and to faſten upon ſuch perſons as announced this intention a degree of reſponſibility which would be a pledge for the peaceableneſs of their deſigns, and the decency of their demeanour. In what way does this enactment trench upon the ſacred right which the Conſtitution beſtows, or give that fatal ſtab to their liberties which was apprehended? He was ſure that it was calculated to obſtruct no meeting which either ought to be held, or which it was honeſt to hold. It could only mean then to prevent thoſe meetings in which the true object ſkulks behind the pretext of a lawful deſign, and where the bad intention was veiled by a plauſible diſguiſe. It was to be obſerved alſo, that the meetings the Bill was framed to diſcourage were thoſe chiefly where vaſt crowds were aſſembled, and where neceſſarily moſt miſchief and diſturbance of the public peace were likely to be generated. Even this practice was to be prohibited by exiſting laws, by which tumultuous petitions were prohibited, and the number of ſignatures to be affixed to any one petition not only greatly limited, but the object of it was required to be approved by three juſtices, or the grand jury. If meetings were held in defiance of the enactment of the preſent Bill, the aſſembly would be unlawful, and might be diſperſed by the magiſtrate in like manner as he was at preſent entitled to diſperſe a mob under the riot act. The notice required the ſubject to be treated as he mentioned, and in order to prevent deſtructive views from being purſued under ſpecious pretexts, the magiſtrate was empowered to judge of the purpoſe evidently aimed at, and authorized to put an end to the meeting, if his diſcretion ſuggeſted the neceſſity of ſuch an exerciſe of authority. This was a meaſure which regard for the public peace rendered fit to be adopted, where it was threatened by ſuch extravagant attempts as theſe meetings had encouraged, and the flagrant abuſes of them which had been committed. England was, he ſaid, the only country in the world where meetings for a ſimilar purpoſe were allowed without the attendance of a magiſtrate. The moſt free ſtates that had exiſted; the Roman Republic itſelf, in the zenith of its liberty and fame, had never permitted the people to aſſemble but in a regular body, formally collected and under the controul of a magiſtrate. Theſe proviſions of the Bill, Sir John ſaid, were all of them conſiſtent with

with the ſpirit of our laws and the practice of our governments. To thoſe who would exerciſe it with diſcretion and virtue, they were calculated to preſerve the enjoyment of a right by guarding againſt the abuſe of it. The latter proviſions were equally fitted to repreſs thoſe lectures, and other kind of political diſcuſſions, which it was intended to prevent.

Political ſubjects, he ſaid, might be diſcuſſed under the idea of an exiſting grievance, which the ſufferers wiſhed to have redreſſed, and the Bill was not introduced to prohibit ſuch a mode of conſidering them. That was a right peculiar to Engliſhmen, a right too ſacred to be diſturbed on any pretence whatever. Should this privilege be extended to protect thoſe oratorial diſplays of grievances heightened with miſrepreſentation and falſehood, to which mankind were naturally induced always too implicitly to liſten, and eſpecially when ſuch diſcuſſions, ſupported as they were by uncandid and untrue pictures of affairs, were meant to prove a ſource of pecuniary benefit to the perſons by whom they were promoted, the Bill interpoſed a ſalutary preventive. One of the principles from which much of the anarchy which had deſolated France reſulted, was that, Mr. Solicitor ſaid, by which it was held, that every public functionary ſhould be paid for his ſervices by the public. The Britiſh Conſtitution had long abandoned this principle, and had rendered all ſuch offices gratuitous, and provided that they ſhould be performed from diſintereſted views. The principle to which he alluded had filled France with the agents of the Jacobin club, who found their private advantage linked with the fervor of their zeal in the propagation of the doctrines of their maſters. The error of adopting ſuch an idea, the experience of a ſhort period, marked with calamity, bloodſhed, and horror, had ſufficiently manifeſted, and had been lately renounced in France. The municipal offices were to be diſcharged gratuitouſly. It was impoſſible, therefore, not to perceive the impropriety of permitting or countenancing diſcuſſions, in which individuals feeling themſelves intereſted will be diſpoſed to advance the moſt dangerous and ſeditious artifices.

What had already been ſaid and anſwered in the moſt ſatisfactory manner might be again urged. What is the neceſſity at the preſent time for adopting ſuch meaſures? The anſwer was clear, ſimple, and obvious; the notoriety of the daring proceedings of the ſeditious. There was no Gentleman oppoſite who had not heard of ſuch aſſemblies, and the flagitious deſigns they not only entertained but publicly profeſſed. The diſcuſſion of pretended or even real grievances, and even the right of petitioning itſelf, had been employed as a medium to excite ſedition and provoke diſcontent.

tent. The report of the Committee of Secrecy, and the evidence adduced on the fubfequent trials, contained variety of correfpondence, from which it appeared that, while the intention to petition was affumed as the oftenfible object, no fuch defign ferioufly exifted, and that very different plans were agitated. An Honourable Baronet (Sir W. Milner) whom he did not fee in his place, had mentioned on a former day the cafe of Yorke, alias Redhead. In that cafe it was proved that a meeting had been held at Sheffield for the profeffed purpofe of petitioning, which however it appeared was only intended to furnifh an opportunity of criminal and feditious difcourfe: a petition was, indeed, moved, but it was fo contrived, that the meafure fhould be received with marks of contempt, and difapprobation, and it was accordingly negatived. Yorke there held that feditious and criminal difcourfe—[here the Solicitor General was reminded by Mr. Erfkine, acrofs the table, that the cafe of Yorke was not yet concluded, judgment not having been paffed.] The Solicitor General thought that though it might be improper to make any obfervations on a cafe in which judgment ftill depended, he was entitled to call that difcourfe feditious, becaufe the jury had found it fo to be. In what manner then was this Bill to apply to meetings actuated by fimilar difpofitions? It would not prevent the fober difcuffion of a real petition, but it would prevent the introduction of difcourfes, and guard againft the perverfion of meetings which were likely to lead to fuch purpofes as thofe to which he had referred. The magiftrates on perceiving their real views, or hearing fuch difcuffion as betrayed their object, would inftantly difperfe them, while the magiftrate himfelf was better protected in the execution of his duty by the authority which it allowed him to exercife, and the force againft refiftance with which he was invefted.

The recent inftance of the Weftminfter meeting had been adduced to fhew that great bodies of people might affemble in the exercife of a conftitutional right, and conduct themfelves with fuitable propriety and order. Without adverting particularly to the inftance, he would afk, whether fuch a meeting might not have taken place even had this Bill been paffed into a law? Would not fuch a number of houfeholders have come forward to give notice of the meeting as would have rendered it confiftent with the law, and the fame conclufion have taken place, and the fame good effects been obtained? How then could the Bill be reprefented as fubverfive of the beft privileges of the people of England, or as ftabbing the principles of the Conftitution?

Perhaps

Perhaps it might be ſaid, that the inconſiderable number of men, to whom theſe ſeditious principles and deſigns were aſcribed, could not be ſo formidable as to ſanction ſuch a meaſure. Sir John declared, he felt the higheſt pleaſure in reflecting that their numbers were comparatively inconſiderable; but inconſiderable as they were, they might nevertheleſs be capable of doing infinite miſchief. He obſerved that it had been laid down as a maxim, by the writers of their own ſentiments, that all revolutions were effected by minorities. One of the moſt diſtinguiſhed members of the Conſtituent Aſſembly, (D'Andre) had remarked, that the active, perſevering ſpirit of the few would always triumph over the peaceable and inactive diſpoſition of the more numerous claſs of the community. Conſidering the boldneſs which they manifeſted, the deſire of magnifying their own number and importance, and their aſſumption of a formidable appearance, the ſmall number of people who compoſed theſe ſocieties was no reaſon to ſhew that the Bill was leſs required by the occaſion. The inceſſant activity of their machinations and enterprizes, rendered it neceſſary for Government to embrace ſtrong meaſures to oppoſe their progreſs.

Some of the gentlemen on the oppoſite ſide had ſaid, why adopt extraordinary meaſures? Had not the Government of former times been protected by the exiſting laws? It was true, that during periods of danger, the exiſtence of the Conſtitution had been adequately defended by theſe laws, with this difference, as was well obſerved by an Honourable Baronet (Sir Francis Baſſet), that the object of theſe men was the total deſtruction of the Conſtitution; that of the friends of the Stuarts only the change of the Sovereign; liberty, religion, and property, if the preſent objects of the ſocieties were attained, were to be overthrown. Repreſentative Government is the demand of the Correſponding Society, as was proved on the State Trials. To theſe principles and their conſequences they ſtill adhere. In France it had been found impoſſible to maintain a Government on the principle of univerſal ſuffrage. The Conſtitution of 1791, in recogniſing that doctrine, ſealed the doom of the Monarchy, and the fate of the King became inevitable. Does not the preſent period then, Sir John aſked, particularly call on the Houſe to adopt meaſures to prevent their introduction and propagation in this country, the conſequence of which would be anarchy, confuſion, and bloodſhed—the overthrow of every ſacred eſtabliſhment, and the outrage of every human and moral feeling?

It

It had been ſaid, that the exiſting laws were ſufficient, and it has been aſked, why had not proſecutions been inſtituted againſt the authors of the crimes complained of? Proſecutions had, in ſome caſes, taken place, but it was a matter of infinite difficulty to obtain that evidence which was neceſſary to conviction. The number of offences made proſecutions of all the offenders almoſt impoſſible, and even upon the exiſting laws, proſecutions would have occaſioned great public expence. The exiſting laws were undeniably defective, as they did not reach the ſocieties from which the evil originated. It was therefore the policy and the intention of the preſent Bill at once to provide againſt the deficiency of the laws, by other means than puniſhment, and by preventing the meetings to anticipate all the miſchief they mght occaſion. Under theſe impreſſions he would ſupport the ſecond reading of the Bill.

The queſtion being put,

MR. ERSKINE ſaid, he found it extremely difficult to reconcile what he had heard from the Honourable and learned Gentleman who had juſt ſat down, with what he had heard from gentlemen on the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe, on the night when the Houſe granted leave to bring in the Bill. It was not his intention to treſpaſs on the rules of the Houſe by referring, in any particular manner, to ſpeeches that had been delivered in former debates upon this meaſure; but when leave had been aſked to bring in the Bill, an Honourable Gentleman, he underſtood, had ſaid, that the criminal law of the land was amply ſufficient for theſe two purpoſes; the ſecurity of the Government, and the comfort of the people, but that a particular conjuncture of affairs had ariſen, which made it at this time neceſſary to enact the preſent law. The Honourable and learned Gentleman, however, had that day taken a different courſe; he had aſſerted, that the preſent Act was ſtrictly conſonant to the principles of the Conſtitution; an Act never thought of in the reign of Charles the Second, after the horrors and confuſion of the former reign; an Act never dreamt of in the reign of King William, when the Government was newly eſtabliſhed, during a diſputed ſucceſſion, or in the two rebellions that raged in the ſubſequent reigns; an Act which even the preſent Miniſtry never thought of paſſing, when they ſuſpended that grand palladium of Engliſh liberty, the Habeas Corpus Act; nor when they had the reports of Committees, ſtating the exiſtence of treaſonable plots, upon their table. Upon what grounds had the learned Solicitor General defended the neceſſity of paſſing the preſent Bill? Upon any freſh reaſon that exiſted? Upon any new plots? No. Inſtead of adducing new evidence, inſtead of going over the new

conſpiracies that were ſuppoſed to be hatching, the learned Gentleman had trodden again the dull track that he had trodden ſo often before, and had travelled back again to the meeting that had been held near Sheffield, in which Mr. Yorke, it had been aſſerted, made a ſpeech highly ſeditious. Upon that aſſertion, he was glad to find that the learned Gentleman had taken a hint from him, and had deſiſted from purſuing a ſubject, the impropriety of which, in the preſent circumſtance of Mr. Yorke, being about to receive the judgment of the Court of King's Bench, he muſt be fully convinced.

The learned Gentleman, out of his bounty, had been pleaſed to ſay, that he allowed the right of the ſubject to petition the King and Parliament, and that he conſidered that right not to be taken away by the preſent Bill; not only not to be taken away, but even to be rendered ſafer by it. In contradiction to this poſition, he would maintain poſitively and diſtinctly, that the Bill did abſolutely deſtroy the right of the ſubject to petition. It was a maxim of law when any thing was prohibited by law, the means by which ſuch thing might be done were alſo prohibited: on the contrary, when the law permitted a thing to be done, it alſo permitted all the means by which ſuch thing might be done. This was one of the cleareſt maxims of law, and by this maxim he deſired that the preſent Bill might be examined. In the firſt part of the Bill an exception was contained, which, it had been contended, was ſufficient to preſerve the freedom of the country; it excepted meetings called by Lord Lieutenants, Sheriffs, and Juſtices of the Peace in their particular diſtricts. The Conſtitution of England was, he ſaid, made up of balanced, mixed, and oppoſing powers; the prerogatives of the Crown and the right of the people were equally poiſed, conſequently the right of petitioning, perhaps againſt arbitrary meaſures, will be rendered nugatory by this Bill. According to its enactments, no ſubject was to be diſcuſſed which the magiſtrates did not approve; thus thoſe magiſtrates who are appointed by, and removeable at the will of the Crown, (ſuch as Sheriffs, &c.) are to be the judges of the nature of their petitions. The magiſtrates who repreſent Majeſty will therefore never permit the people to meet for the purpoſe of petitioning againſt a meaſure of high prerogative, or in any caſe where the King may be ſuppoſed not to conſult the happineſs of the people. Will any man pretend that this is not a flagrant invaſion of the people's privileges, and abſolutely deſtructive of the very exiſtence of the Conſtitution, compoſed of mixed and ſeparate parts? A direct and groſs violation of the Bill of Rights, on the maintenance of which his

Majeſty

Majeſty holds his title to the Crown? Thoſe, therefore, who adviſe his Majeſty to the meaſure, bring his title into queſtion, and adviſe him to a breach of his coronation oath, by thus deſtroying the unqualified and undeniable right of the people to petition. Did the Honourable and learned Gentleman, he would aſk, find in the Bill of Rights, that the right of aſſembling and petitioning had been a right claimed with ſuch firmneſs, and contended for with ſo much glorious ſtruggle, as a right to be exerciſed with the permiſſion of magiſtrates, or even of the King himſelf? But the principles of the Conſtitution and the Bill of Rights were all forgotten; the principle of alarm ſeemed to juſtify every violation of the liberties of the people, and to afford a ſufficient pretence of laying waſte all the wiſdom of our anceſtors.

The Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, that there was no country in Europe where meetings were allowed to be held without the interpoſition of the magiſtrate; no, not in ancient Rome: for his part he did not wiſh to look abroad for Governments; he wiſhed only to ſupport the Britiſh Conſtitution ſacred and inviolable, as he found it delivered into his hands, and as it ſtood at the Revolution. He was to do his duty as a Member of the Britiſh Parliament: he was not then to conſider what Government was beſt; he wiſhed to ſupport that which was already eſtabliſhed, and which had ſtood the teſt of ages. It was one thing to make a Government, it was another to rob the people of their rights; which, if Government dared attempt, the people would be juſtified in reſiſting ſuch glaring oppreſſion. He would ſay, again and again, that it was the right of the people to reſiſt that Government which exerciſed tyranny. It had been ſaid, that bold language was held at public meetings; it was certainly bold to ſay, that the people had a right to reſiſt, and that they ought to riſe; but there were ſome occaſions which rendered the boldeſt language warrantable.

In his attempt to prove the ſeditious views of the ſocieties, the learned Solicitor General had neither cited any of the ſpeeches that had been delivered at Copenhagen-Houſe, nor had he even brought down his own Old Bailey ſpeech; but the people were diſcontented, and would not be quiet. Upon this ſubject he would read the opinion of a man of the higheſt abilities and authority; a man whoſe talents and whoſe eloquence were of that ſuperior kind, that every thing that came from him, came with a weight that rendered it almoſt irreſiſtible; he meant the late Earl of Chatham. In the year 1770, when a motion was made by the Marquis of Rockingham, relative to the diſcontents that had broken out, which diſcontents he imputed not to any conſpiracy of the people againſt

 the

the Government, but to a conſpiracy of the Government againſt the people; that great man, Lord Chatham, had ſaid,

"If we mean ſeriouſly to unite the nation within itſelf, we muſt "convince them, that their complaints are regarded, and that their "grievances ſhall be redreſſed. On that foundation I would take "the lead in recommending peace and harmony to the people. "On any other, I would never wiſh to ſee them united again. "If the breach in the Conſtitution be effectually repaired, the peo- "ple will of themſelves return to a ſtate of tranquillity.—If not "—may diſcord prevail for ever! I know to what point this doc- "trine and this language will appear directed; but I feel the prin- "ciples of an Engliſhman, and I utter them without apprehenſion "or reſerve. The criſis is indeed alarming—ſo much the more "does it require a prudent relaxation on the part of Government. "If the King's ſervants will not permit a conſtitutional queſtion "to be decided on, according to the forms, and on the principles of "the Conſtitution, it muſt then be decided in ſome other manner; "and rather than it ſhould be given up, rather than the nation "ſhould ſurrender their birth-right to a deſpotic Miniſter, I hope, "my Lords, old as I am, I ſhall ſee the queſtion brought to iſſue, "and fairly tried between the people and the Government!"

With the ſanction of the ſentiments of the venerable and illuſtrious Earl of Chatham, he would maintain that the people of England ſhould defend their rights, if neceſſary, by the laſt extremity to which freemen could reſort. For my own part, ſaid Mr. Erſkine, I ſhall never ceaſe to ſtruggle in ſupport of liberty. In no ſituation will I deſert the cauſe. I was born a free man, and by God I ſhall never die a ſlave.

That the queſtion ſhould be decided by ſuch a conteſt, he declared he did not wiſh: never would he do or ſay any thing that did not tend to avert the horrors of a revolution; a calamity which the ſupporters of the Bill affected to fear, though that Bill was the moſt likely method to produce it.

In the whole of the late proceedings and events, one of the moſt fatal things had been, that the higher orders of the people ſeparated themſelves too much from the lower orders. This had been one of the cauſes of the Revolution in France. Under their arbitrary Monarchs there were literally but two claſſes of the people; a pampered, profligate, proud nobility, and a low, miſerable, and abject rabble; no intermediate claſs, no knowledge, no virtue. It was to this that all the horrors and calamities that followed the French Revolution were to be attributed. To look back to the wretchedſtate of the French people, divided only into two claſſes

that he had defcribed, it would be feen, that man, by degrees, feel- ing the dignity of his nature, roufed at conftant difgrace and perfe- cution, fhook off the trammels of defpotifm, and afferted his rights. The people drew a parallel, which, when he confidered their en- lightened minds, appeared to him to be aftonifhing; they drew a parallel between the ftate of France and this country. France had an unreformed Church, and an unreformed State; a profligate defpotifm, and the moft profound fuperftition. There were no gentle gradations of rank; and the Government rofe not, as had been faid by a celebrated writer of the Englifh Government, from a broad bafe to a point. Where was the parallel between fuch a country and fuch a Government, and the country and the Confti- tution of England? Why did Minifters not come forward with this meafure when France was diftracted by anarchy, from which all the principles fo prejudicial to this country had arifen? When they came forward with triumphant defcriptions of the improvement of the French Conftitution, inftead of availing themfelves of that opportunity of failing into the harbour of peace, and putting an end to the miferies of a moft difaftrous war; inftead of recommend- ing the Conftitution to the love of the people, by an experience of its practical bleffings inftead of the higher ranks endeavouring, by the tendernefs of their behaviour, to draw the lower orders back to content and to happinefs, a Bill was brought forward which outraged every principle of freedom, and overthrew the very foun- dation of the Conftitution? Let any lawyer fhew that this Bill was confonant to the principles of the Conftitution? He defied the whole profeffion to prove it. The Conftitution was abrogated, and annulled by it. The Bill would not allow the people to meet without advertifing their intention, and furely this was a very extraordinary circumftance. The people are the proper judges of the grievances under which they labour. They may think the meafures of Adminiftration a grievance, yet the magiftrate is to be the judge of the nature of the complaint, however refpectful and inoffenfive, and may even pronounce a requifition which cen- fured the ruinous meafures of a Minifter, or propofed a reforma- tion of abufes, a crime againft the law.

Our anceftors were content to wait till fome overt act appeared, which was the fubject of punifhment. But, under this Bill, the determination of a magiftrate is to interfere between the people and the affertion of their rights and the complaint of their griev- ances. Depend upon it, faid Mr. Erfkine, the people of England, unlefs they are loft to all fenfe of freedom, and of national honour, *will* not, and *ought* not to fubmit.

He

He ſtated the power which the law beſtowed upon magiſtrates, of arbitrarily judging of the intention of the people; and even leſt he himſelf might be reſponſible for the conſequences of any meeting, the neceſſity a virtuous magiſtrate might be under of diſperſing a meeting of the beſt men with the pureſt views. He likewiſe ſtated various abſurdities which reſulted from the authority beſtowed by the Bill on magiſtrates.

He would ſuppoſe that at ſuch a meeting as had been convened, in the manner alluded to, he ſpoke with ſeverity of the evils that exiſted, and with firmneſs of the grievances under which the people laboured; he would ſuppoſe that he ſaid, what the Miniſter himſelf once ſaid, viz. that as long as the Parliament remained unreformed, no wiſe and virtuous Adminiſtration could exiſt: he would ſuppoſe that he did this, could the magiſtrate diſperſe the meeting? He affirmed that he might diſperſe it, and could not be puniſhed.

One of the clauſes of the Bill ſtated, that "in caſe ſuch meeting ſhall, by reaſon of any ſpecial circumſtances, become dangerous to the public peace, in the judgment of two or more juſtices of the peace, &c." Here was a diſcretion given to the magiſtrates of the moſt dangerous kind. Where, he begged to know, did the Solicitor General find a precedent of ſo broad a diſcretion given before to magiſtrates? A diſcretion too for which they could not be puniſhed; becauſe, when the law placed any thing in the diſcretion of a magiſtrate, it could not puniſh him for any miſtake which he might commit in the exerciſe of that diſcretion? If it was the intention of the Miniſter to prevent the people from meeting, for the purpoſe of propoſing any alteration in Church or State, or of exciting diſlike to the King's perſon and Government, there was no neceſſity for the preſent Bill; and the proviſions inſerted in it, for the purpoſe of producing ſuch an effect, ought to be blotted out. The fact was, that they were determined to give the magiſtrates the power of diſperſing public meetings. He would, he ſaid, proceed to ſhew the groſs and abominable abſurdities of this part of the Bill.

Suppoſe thirty or forty of the moſt reſpectable magiſtrates in the country; ſuppoſe even that the twelve judges of England were to join in propoſing a meeting; two hired, hungry, jobbing juſtices might diſperſe them all. Could a criminal information be filed againſt ſuch magiſtrates for ſo doing? The Court of King's Bench had determined a caſe that very morning, that might be applied in the preſent inſtance, and which was ſufficient to eſtabliſh the legal principle of the clauſe in queſtion. A law had been paſſed in the

reign

reign of James the Firſt, authoriſing the magiſtrates to ſearch for a particular kind of leather. Upon this law a ſearch had been ordered by a magiſtrate, a ſeizure had been made; and, upon examination, the perſon from whom the leather had been ſeized had been acquitted: a queſtion aroſe, whether an action would lie againſt the magiſtrate for having ordered ſuch a ſeizure? It had been decided in the affirmative, becauſe the particular law gave no diſcretion to the magiſtrate. It would be much more manly, much more conſiſtent with truth and candour, to come forward and tell the people of England that they were not any longer to preſume to arrogate or to enjoy ſuch privileges, than to inſult their underſtandings by telling them they retain that liberty of which they feel themſelves deprived. He would aſk how they could petition for the redreſs of grievances without communication. He had in his hands an Addreſs to the Jury at the Old Bailey, which would ſhew that no conſpiracy had exiſted, and that the opinion of the Judge had not been as repreſented. The Chief Juſtice ſays—

"All men may, nay all men muſt, if they poſſeſs the faculty of "thinking, reaſon upon every thing which ſufficiently intereſts "them to become objects of their attention; and, among the ob-"jects of the attention of free men, the principles of Govern-"ment, the Conſtitution of particular Governments, and, above "all the Conſtitution of the Government under which they live, "will naturally engage attention and provoke ſpeculation. The "power of communication of thoughts and opinions is the "gift of God, and the freedom of it is the ſource of all ſcience, "the firſt fruits and the ultimate happineſs of ſociety; and therefore "it ſeems to follow, that human laws ought not to interpoſe, nay, "cannot interpoſe, to prevent the communication of ſentiments "and opinions in voluntary aſſemblies of men."

From this it was evident that the Judge conſidered voluntary communication as not only lawful, but as a right which could not be taken away.

He next commented upon the contents of the preamble to the Bill, and contended, that the moſt abominable and tyrannous act had always been paſſed under the pretence of making the ſubjects happineſs the ground for the meaſure. Other matters were alſo to be conſidered in the proviſions of the Act: it was in the power of any one man, by going to a meeting, and ſpeaking a few ſeditious words, whether appoſite to the ſubject or not, to afford a warrantable reaſon for a juſtice to diſſolve the meeting; any man whatſoever, though he be not one who ſigned the notice, or who called the meeting; any ſpy (and magiſtrates had their ſpies) with half-

half-a-crown in his pocket, might go, and, by uttering seditious expressions, afford his paymaster the power of putting an end to all discussion, and to the meeting. He said, he considered the law of the land as fully adequate to all the purposes of good government, without the introduction of the present measure. In any public meeting, when a breach of the peace was committed, a magistrate, by the existing law, was entitled to interfere; and in his support, was authorised to raise the *posse comitatus*, if necessary: and also by the Riot Act, he had likewise the power of dispersing tumultuous assemblies: where then was the necessity for introducing a new law, and giving a vital stab to the Constitution?

The Solicitor General had observed, that prosecutions had little effect, and under that pretence, licensing Acts, Mr. Erskine said, were to be introduced. All laws, in all Governments, even the most despotic, in their preamble, pretend to be dictated for the good of the people; and however the Bill and its supporters might assume that pretence, it was to be judged by its natural tendency. Was it consonant with the spirit of the Constitution, that men, met for the best of purposes, should be dispersed, if a ministerial spy thought proper to propound some point which appeared exceptionable to the magistrate? Let Gentlemen consider what the present laws were by which the Constitution was defended. If it required new sanctions, he would willingly join in framing them; he would however adapt his remedies to the discontents and disaffection of the people upon principles suited to the nature of a free State, and of the nature of our own Constitution. Mr. Burke, whose talents he reverenced, and who had displayed his wonderful powers for years, in opposition to the Right Honourable Gentleman, by a most unfortunate coincidence of opinion, had of late recommended himself to his favour: that great man, when speaking of the American war, with all those graces of oratory which would carry down his fame to posterity with that of the fairest productions of Grecian and Roman eloquence, had expressed himself in terms peculiarly applicable to the present time. His words were these:

" *It is not very difficult for well-formed minds to abandon their in-*
" *terest; but the separation of fame and virtue is an harsh divorce.*
" *Liberty is in danger of being made unpopular to Englishmen.* Con-
" tending for an imaginary power, we begin to acquire the spirit of
" domination, and to lose the relish of *honest equality*. The prin-
" ciples of our forefathers become suspected to us, because we see
" them animating the present opposition of our children. *The*

" *faults*

"*faults which grow out of the luxuriance of freedom appear much more*
"*shocking to us, than the base vices which are generated from the rank-*
"*ness of servitude. Accordingly the least resistance to power appears*
"*more inexcusable in our eyes, than the greatest abuses of authority.*
"*All dread of a standing military force is looked upon as a superstitious*
"*panic.* All shame of calling in foreigners and savages in a civil
"contest is worn off. We grow indifferent to the consequences
"inevitable to ourselves, from the plan of ruling half the empire
"by a mercenary sword. We are taught to believe that a desire
"of domineering over our countrymen is love to our country;
"and those who hate civil war abet rebellion; and that the amiable
"and conciliatory virtues of lenity, moderation, and tenderness to
"the privileges of those who depend on this kingdom, are a sort
"of treason to the State."

This was not a pompous display of theoretical observations, but a series of wise and political reflections, meant to have a real and practical consequence.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. Erskine, "will see by this, that the word *Equality* is not a word of new coinage, and introduced into the dictionary only three years ago, but a word of long and ancient usage, and stamped with the sanction of such an authority as that of Mr. Burke. In my opinion, the higher ranks do ill in thus seceding from the lower. If the latter have swerved from their duty, would it not be better for the former to rally them round the principles of the Constitution, and lead them back to their duty, than thus to make, as it were, a separate cause against them? Let those higher ranks recollect what must be the certain consequence of any contest between them and the lower ranks. Such a contest, I am sure, I deprecate sincerely; and it is because I sincerely deprecate it, that I thus wish the higher ranks to take it into their most serious contemplation. What distraction has seized the House. You have said, that from the convulsed state of France you expect better terms of peace. Will she not act in the same manner with you? If you give her reason to suppose that you are convulsed, will she not expect better terms of peace from you on account of such convulsions? Good God! because a Prince, whose morals make him dear to every man in the nation, was going down to his Parliament during a war that has snatched the bread from the mouths of the poor; because, in the crowd that surrounds him, there is one man, miscreant enough to offer an outrage to that Prince; because, I say, the outrage committed by that one man, and which I affirm is punishable by the statute of Edward III. is to be charged against the whole people of England, we are to be deprived of

 our

our moſt valuable rights and privileges. As there is always a diſpoſition to exaggerate events, the French will be induced, by our proceedings, to form an idea that a wiſh to change the Government of the country, and to introduce ſuch a Conſtitution as that of France, actually exiſts in England, and they will make you ſpend twenty millions more in the proſecution of the war.

Mr. Erskine entered into a legal argument, to prove that the offences recapitulated in the preſent Bill could be puniſhed by the exiſting laws, and that thoſe laws were amply ſufficient.

The 13th of Charles II. was admitted to be the precedent of the Bill, but it muſt not go the ſame length. Under that act 100,000 perſons might aſſemble, and ſign any petition to the King or the Parliament voluntarily; but the act prevented perſons from hawking about petitions to perſons to ſign, who might not know that any grievances exiſted. It alſo provided, that not more than ten perſons ſhould preſent any petition to the King. It only authoriſed magiſtrates to interfere when an overt act of tumult took place, or to require ſecurity if danger to the peace was apprehended; but it never prohibited a meeting to be held; it did not forbid voluntary communication, but prohibited tumultuous petitioning: this Bill prohibits petitioning upon grievances which actually exiſt. An unreformed Parliament had been alluded to. The language of the Miniſter once had been, "That we had loſt America by the corruption of an unreformed Parliament; and that we ſhould never have a wiſe and honourable Adminiſtration, nor be freed from the evils of unneceſſary war, nor the fatal effects of the funding ſyſtem, till a radical reform was obtained." The Right Honourable Gentleman had in that prediction ſhewn his prophetic power; for, to ſuch a Parliament was owing that deteſtable, ruinous, and deſtructive war into which the Honourable Gentleman had plunged the country. The Right Honourable Gentleman would, however, brand with the imputation of ſedition all who employed the ſame language that he himſelf once had held, or who expreſſed their diſcontent at the fatal meaſures of his Adminiſtration. That the ſocieties ſhould complain of this evil was ſurely not to be wondered at. Though they had complained, he would aſk, had they raiſed the ſtandard againſt the Conſtitution of the country? In arguing this queſtion, he deſired not to be anſwered by old muſty records that had been produced on the trials, by that maſs of matter which ſo wearied the patience of every man who was preſent when it was produced, or by thoſe letters which had been read upon every ſubject. He deſired not to be anſwered by ſuch documents; becauſe he contended that, in the trials that had occurred,

occurred, the iſſue that had been joined was, whether the real object of the ſocieties was a Reform in Parliament, or whether that was only a pretence to cover traitorous deſigns againſt the Conſtitution? The Chief Juſtice Eyre had alluded to this iſſue in his charge to the Grand Jury, when he had ſaid, "If there be ground to conſider that the Reform of Parliament had been a mere colour or pretext laid hold of as a deſign againſt the Government of the country, in that caſe he had already ſtated what his opinion was upon that ſubject; and the only queſtion in ſuch event would be, Whether or not the matter of fact could be proved?" The Chief Juſtice had further ſaid, that "if theſe aſſociations meant nothing more than an redreſs of grievances, and to have nothing elſe in view, then of courſe no charge could be made againſt them." The iſſue, therefore, was, whether the real object of the ſocieties was a Reform in Parliament, or a deſign to deſtroy the Conſtitution? The indictment againſt the priſoners expreſsly charged them with holding a Convention with a view to depoſe the King, and to deſtroy the Conſtitution. The Jury by acquitting them had decided that no ſuch deſign to deſtroy the Conſtitution exiſted. Their verdict was not given from a diſagreement with the Judge on the point of law, but they had founded it on the principle of the fact, that had been alledged, not having been proved.

He had ſaid, ſecondly, that the exiſting laws were ſufficient for the puniſhment of the offences recapitulated in the preſent Bill, becauſe, if perſons aſſembled for any unlawful purpoſes, thoſe aſſemblies were unlawful aſſemblies, and might be puniſhed as ſuch. If there were tumultuous proceedings, the magiſtrates, under the ſtatute of Henry IV. (which Lord Mansfield, in the caſe of Lord George Gordon, held to be ſtill in force) might take ſureties from perſons guilty of ſuch proceedings, and might aſſemble the *poſſe comitatus* to diſperſe ſuch tumultuous meetings. He therefore contended, that no man could be guilty of any of the overt acts that had been mentioned, without being affected by the laws as they now exiſted.

There was, laſtly, the Riot Act, the proviſions of which were fully ſufficient for the diſperſing of illegal meetings. By the laws as they now ſtood, it was neceſſary that a perſon ſhould be actually doing an unlawful act, in order to ſubject him to puniſhment; in the caſe of the King againſt Boyce, it was held, that though the defendant had not been actually concerned in the pulling down of mills, yet, as he had taken part in the meeting of perſons ſo employed, waved his hat, and approved of the proceedings, he came within the meaning of the act, and was held to be guilty of felony.

 On

On the whole view of the ſubject therefore, Mr. Erſkine ſaid, he was clearly of opinion, that the exiſting laws were amply ſufficient; that they did not require any extenſion, and that there was not the leaſt neceſſity for the preſent Bill. That Bill he felt to be a daring attack upon the principles of the Conſtitution: he felt and ſaw alſo, that Miniſters, at a time when every thing ſhould be done to reſtore harmony and peace to the country, were adopting meaſures that not only tended to produce ſuch an effect, but tended to ſwell the ſum of public grievance, and to lay the foundation for freſh diſcontents in the minds of the people.

Mr. Milbank ſaid, the Riot Act already authoriſed any Magiſtrate, Mayor, or Sheriff, to diſperſe any meeting compoſed of twelve perſons or more, ſuſpected of aſſembling for tumultuous purpoſes, and if thoſe perſons did not immediately diſperſe, when ſo commanded, they were guilty of felony; he therefore ſhould oppoſe the ſecond reading of the Bill. The Bill, he feared, might be made uſe of for bad and pernicious purpoſes, and ſuffer many an error to creep into the State; and upon theſe principles, convinced that there was already a ſtrong and ſatisfactory reſiſtance to every probable evil, of the nature adverted to in the Bill, by the law as it now ſtands. After a few words more, Mr. Milbank ſaid, he would not detain the Houſe any longer, but gave his public and decided negative to the queſtion.

Mr. Anstruther roſe to reply to ſeveral parts of his Honourable and learned Friend's ſpeech, the whole of which, he thought, had been more laboured and in detail than was neceſſary in that ſtage of the Bill. He ſaid, his ſincere wiſh was, that the Bill might meet with a full and ample diſcuſſion of its merits; and that the Houſe, after adverting to the circumſtances of the preſent day, and the nature of the meaſure propoſed, ſhould fairly and temperately conſider and decide whether there exiſted a neceſſity of any interference on their part; and if there did exiſt ſuch a neceſſity, whether the Bill in queſtion was the proper ſtep to be taken.

The Honourable and learned Gentlemen who ſpoke laſt but one (Mr. Erſkine) had attempted to trace the Bill up to a general ſyſtem of ſeparating the rich from the poor, as if the former were ſet up in battle array againſt the latter. To this he muſt give the moſt direct and unequivocal contradiction; on the contrary, he would aſſert, that there were aſſociations formed of all claſſes of people, for the ſuppreſſion of Jacobins and Jacobin principles; and that the wealthy and higher orders were, in conjunction with the lower, ſtanding forward equally in defence of the great maſs of the people, againſt the diſſemination and progreſs of miſchievous

prin-

principles which threatened to deſtroy all ranks, and bury them in one common ruin. The ſame Gentleman had laid it alſo down as a fundamental propoſition, that the liberty of the ſubject was taken away by the Bill: becauſe, when the law prohibited any thing, it prohibited at the ſame time, every manner of doing it; hence inferring the converſe of the propoſition, that what it permitted, was permitted in every way; and therefore, in reſtraining the right of public meetings in any way, the principle was ſo far violated. In anſwer to this, Mr. Anſtruther ſaid, he muſt take the liberty of declaring that the learned Gentleman was miſtaken; for nothing was clearer than that the law prohibited every method of doing that which was forbidden, yet the inverſe of that propoſition could never be maintained, that what it permitted it allowed to be done in every manner. In proof of which he referred the Houſe to the very Bill depending, where public meetings were permitted with certain formularies, but were forbidden without them. His Honourable and learned Friend had, nevertheleſs, contended, that a lawful act could never be done in an unlawful manner, and ſeemed to found his oppoſition to the Bill on that general argument, maintaining, that it was an abridgment of the hitherto acknowledged liberties of the country.

The major propoſition was not only invalid, but his Honourable and learned Friend's minor was ſo likewiſe; the country having never before been in a ſimilar predicament to the preſent, conſequently, could not before require that abridgment. Suppoſing for a moment that the Bill were an abridgment of the liberties of the people, no precedent of the ſame effect could be ſtated, becauſe no ſimilar cauſe could be inſtanced. His Honourable and learned Friend had alſo ſaid, that the Bill would take away all right of petition, becauſe two magiſtrates, in the exerciſe of the diſcretion inveſted in them, might diſperſe the meeting previous to its deliberation or reſolutions, on trivial, capricious, and unfounded grounds, and yet was not liable to be called to account for ſo doing. The Honourable and learned Gentleman was here again miſtaken; becauſe in this caſe, as in any other abuſe of power, magiſtrates would be ſubject to account and puniſhment, if they ſhould preſume to diſperſe any public meeting without fair, reaſonable, and good grounds.

His Honourable and learned Friend had, Mr. Anthuther obſerved, attempted to faſten a contradiction on his Honourable and learned Friend (the Solicitor General) who maintained that the Bill was not only conſiſtent with the liberty of the people, but that it protected and preſerved that liberty. This he thought perfectly

fectly reconcileable, when fairly ftated, inafmuch as the Bill left every ufeful and conftitutional liberty untouched, and only reftrained the pernicious excefs and abufe of it. Much ftrefs, he remarked, had been laid on the novelty of the meafure, and it had been roundly afferted, that it was unknown to the Conftitution: he wifhed to remind the Houfe, that new circumftances muft always originate new meafures in every legiflature that was watchful, and did its duty: he denied that it was unknown in principle, and afferted that at all times the Conftitution contained a principle of exertion adequate to every emergency, and its own protection in particular. The general principle was to allow as much liberty as was confiftent with its own fecurity, and the real welfare of the fubject; but the actual *quantum* had often fluctuated in the courfe of our hiftory, as emergencies arofe. The ftatute of Treafons, fo much relied on, the 25th of Edward III. exprefsly fays, "that when new cafes arife, recourfe muft be had to Parliament;" and in later times, particularly fince the reign of Elizabeth, Parliament had interfered in cafes much more fimilar than was generally imagined; they had enacted laws to condemn dangerous tenets, and annexed penalties. This was always done where powerful and active parties attempted to carry dangerous opinions into practical effect. It was to be recollected, that thefe laws were made folely from motives of political prudence, unconnected with moral guilt. What moral offence was it, for example, to deny the King's title to the Crown, or to call him a heretic? Hiftory had fhewn, that thefe opinions were connected with very wide and deep-rooted practical confequences, and therefore they were condemned, forbidden, and made penal in the higheft degree. The fame prudent policy of our anceftors had gone further, and had looked to the connection of fuch tenets with the power and difpofition of foreign ftates, and relaxed or ftrengthened their meafures accordingly.

In the reigns of Charles II. William III. and George I. frequent inftances of this interference were to be found. The meafure was, therefore, in principle, directly warranted by precedent and experience. The feverity of the punifhment had alfo been cited as objectionable; but in the cafes alluded to, equal if not greater feverity was to be found. If there had not been precifely fuch a Bill, it was becaufe no fuch precife evil ever exifted before; but through the whole current of hiftory, we faw the Parliament at times meeting every new evil with new laws, and by fo doing our anceftors had laid down the principle, and given us the example. In the reign of Edward VI. a more fevere act was paffed;

paſſed; and to it we owe the preſervation of the reformed religion in our church; by which any perſon who circulated hand-bills, which brought a meeting together, who entered into reſolutions inimical to the reformed religion, or called a meeting together by ſounding a trumpet, even though he abſented himſelf from the meeting, was anſwerable for every thing which was done there, and liable to the penalties of High Treaſon, if any thing treaſonable paſſed at ſuch meetings, ſo convened. What, he would be glad to know, would the Honourable Gentleman mean to eſtabliſh by his argument, that, when rebellious and civil wars exiſted, no ſuch harſh meaſures were adopted? Did he mean, that we ſhould wait for ſuch an event to apply a remedy? Should we wait to ſee the calamitous ſcenes which paſſed in France re-acted here? Should we wait until a mild and amiable Monarch ſhould be led to the block? or, ſhould we not prevent ſuch threatened evils by a timely and temperate interference? Ought Government to abdicate itſelf, by permitting the deſigns of factious men to overthrow the Conſtitution?

He quoted the ſpeech of the Speaker's predeceſſor to his Majeſty upon paſſing the act to prevent tumultuous petitioning, wherein he traced the footſteps of rebellion and regicide, and deſcribed the evils of ſedition, as pouring upon the country, like the waves of the ocean, from the moſt humble petition to the moſt outrageous and illegal demands. He hoped that we had no occaſion for a repetition of thoſe ſcenes, but we ſhould have wiſdom enough to profit by the example already paſſed. The queſtion, however, really was, did there exiſt a neceſſity for the Bill? To thoſe who ſaw no danger in the propagation of the tenets of the ſocieties, ſo often alluded to in the courſe of the diſcuſſion; to thoſe who thought there was nothing new or improper in meetings, the avowed object of which were diſcuſſion and ſpeeches, tending to defame and degrade the Conſtitution, the Parliament, and the King; to thoſe he would not addreſs himſelf: but would aſk the bulk of the Houſe, whether there ever was a period in which a queſtion was diſcuſſed in the manner the preſent queſtion was diſcuſſing? With reſpect to the argument, drawn by his Honourable and learned Friend, from the charge of the Judge, and the verdicts of the Juries, on the trials of the ſuppoſed conſpirators, he would only ſay, that the finding of the Grand Jury was a proof of the exiſtence of the conſpiracy, while the verdicts of the Juries went only to the exculpation of individuals charged with being accomplices; it would therefore be abſurd for them to ſay, that they muſt ſtop from ap-

plying remedies to the fact, becauſe the guilt of an individual was not eſtabliſhed; for the office of a Legiſlator was governed by very different principles from that of a juror. With regard to the conſpiracy, the moral probability remained the ſame, and the verdicts of the Juries did not at all impeach the report of the Secret Committee.

Could the Houſe poſſibly forget the tranſactions of the London Correſponding Society? Had it eſcaped gentlemen's recollection, that they had formerly decided not to petition Parliament; that they repreſented the Government and Conſtitution merely as impoſitions and grievances on the public; that they were chiefly employed in diſſeminating writings ſubverſive of both; and that on the murder of Louis the Sixteenth, they addreſſed the National Convention, ſaying, that that unhappy country had arrived at the criſis in which they could properly addreſs them?

They came at length, it ſeemed, to a reſolution to petition the King in his way to Parliament. In the courſe of his paſſage there, he was groſsly inſulted, and treated with atrocious violence. It had been contended, and he was willing to admit, that there was no legal connection between the previous meeting and the outrage committed on that occaſion; but there was a high degree of probability that the one proceeded from the other. There was, in fact, a natural connection between the principle avowed and diſperſed at that meeting, and the fact that followed. Whether or no the paper intitled KING-KILLING was eſpouſed and circulated at that meeting, Jacobin principles were aſſerted to the utmoſt extent; and the former doctrine was only an inference from them.

So far had they carried their principles, that they even found fault with the Government of France, as not being ſufficiently Jacobinical, ſince it admitted a diſtinction between thoſe who had property and thoſe who had none; a diſtinction which Mr. Thelwall had publicly declared to be *infamous*; and regretted that he had not the voice of Stentor to make himſelf heard in every part of the aſſembly. They came to a reſolution at the meeting to petition the King, and addreſs the nation. The petition not having been noticed, they declared afterwards, that it was either ſuppreſſed or paſſed over with unfeeling contempt. The firſt alternative related obviouſly to Miniſters, whom they charged with the new offence of High Treaſon againſt the rights and liberties of the people. The other alternative related as clearly to his Majeſty, whom they pronounced unworthy of reſpect, if he did not attend to the happineſs and liberty of his people, and then inſinu-

ated

ated that he had betrayed his truſt. The conſequence of theſe conditions and arguments was obvious, and led to the more dangerous effects. Such arguments, to a mixed meeting of 40,000 perſons, could produce nothing but ill-humour, and excite diſloyalty and treaſon.

MR. ANSTRUTHER read an extract from one of the publications of the Society, in which they declare, "That the only powerful, but ſolitary argument in favour of our Conſtitution, was the virtues of the Monarch, of which they, however, had not experienced the benefits."

Hence Mr. Anſtruther argued, that the preſent circumſtances called loudly for ſome legiſlative interference; it remained, therefore, to enquire, whether the Bill before the Houſe was ſuch a one as they ought to adopt under the preſent circumſtances? The act would not, he ſaid, prevent any public meeting called by ſheriffs, magiſtrates, or corporations; the principal, if not the only meetings antiently, publickly, and hitherto known to, or recognized by, the Conſtitution. It even authoriſed others, under certain conditions, if notice be given by three houſeholders. That notice, indeed, muſt be public; but not as his Honourable and learned Friend had ſtated, given to a magiſtrate; the act contained no ſuch ſpecific condition. They muſt, beſides, further aſſign the object; and what reſtraint was it to the known conſtitutional meetings of the country, to enact that it ſhould not be held if the ſubject was, on the face of it, ſeditious? The magiſtrate might, however, diſperſe it, if, for whatſoever oſtenſible cauſe it was called, the deliberations, or reſolutions, became ſeditious; they well knew that, under many fair pretences, ſuch as Parliamentary Reform, or Redreſs of Grievances, Sedition, and even Treaſon, have been the main object of attention; it was neceſſary therefore to provide that, however oſtenſible and fair the pretence for the meeting, it ſhould not degenerate from it's avowed purpoſe.

One of the clauſes prohibited political lectures where money was taken; this was meant, and ſurely properly meant, to check the pernicious practices of diſſeminating ſedition under the unſuſpecting garb of amuſement and inſtruction. At theſe places the doctrine of holy inſurrection and ſovereignty were blended with amuſement; but, in endeavouring to reſtrain theſe new-fangled occupations, it was ſtrange to be reproached with limiting the old cuſtoms and eſtabliſhed uſages of the country. To clubs and meetings ſuch as theſe, and not to the ancient deſpotiſm, France had owed all its miſeries, and had been ſo often alledged. The Go-

vernment

vernment of France, and all its orders, were yielding and conforming; and till these clubs were instituted, all was prosperous and amicable. For these reasons he heartily approved of the Bill, and would give it his decided support. The principle and practice of it were to be traced in the Constitution, and, in the present circumstances, facts were to be found that called for its application. The Bill was besides as remediable and as little objectionable as possible: It tended to frustrate the machinations of the active and desperate few, who sought to raise themselves on the ruin of their country; and when the season of calm reflection and confidence came, the bulk of the people, he was persuaded, would regard it, as he did, as a measure timely adopted and wisely devised, to protect them from their enemies, and secure the Constitution under which they had so long prospered.

Mr. Harrison said, he would not attempt to endeavour to disprove the connection between the meetings of the London Corresponding Society and the late flagitious violence to his Majesty, lest he should be accounted seditious, and one of the enemies to good order. He abhorred as much as any man the outrage committed on the person of his Majesty, and wished the persons guilty of it to be brought to punishment; he nevertheless could not consent to implicate bodies of men in the atrocious transactions of a few individuals; he hoped and trusted that they were few who were guilty of such an act of extraordinary violence, which he did not consider as a premature act, but a violence dictated by the sudden impulse of the moment on some infatuated persons. The pressure of distresses occasioned by the war, together with the high price of corn and other provisions, had produced ill-temper, and a disposition, among the lower classes throughout the country, which in a moment of madness, might prompt some of them to make so desperate an attempt: the way to prevent the repetition of such crimes was not, however, in his opinion, by acts of unexampled severity, but by giving them a peace, and putting measures in such a train that their distresses might subside. If the necessity for further laws could be clearly and satisfactorily proved, no man would be more ready than himself to promote them; but, from what he had heard, it had not been shewn that the present laws were defective; on the contrary, the Crown Lawyers themselves had proved them to be sufficient. If the law of treason did not apply in the ordinary cases alluded to during the discussion of this Bill, the persons who offended might be adequately punished by the law of misdemeanor. Instead of proving that there was any defect in the law, as it now existed, the

gentlemen

gentlemen in the Executive Government appeared to him to have ſhewn their neglect, their inattention, and inability in not preventing the commiſſion and the repetition of the evils they complained of; in fact, wherever they began to inſtitute a remedy, it was evident that they had been guilty of ſome error before it was brought to effect. Were there any neceſſity to prevent ſedition, he feared the preſent Bill would have a contrary effect; becauſe it was impoſſible for the magiſtrate to have any powerful authority over a large meeting, without the aſſiſtance of the military force, which was a remedy at all times dangerous, and only fit to be applied to in caſes of extremity. Whenever there had been a neceſſity to apply to the military of late, to the great credit of the officers and men, he was happy to be able to ſay, that it had been uſed with much moderation; but he feared that reſiſtance on the one hand, and pique on the other, might one day produce fatal conſequences, and then the ſoldiers might be affected with a contrition the next day, when it might not be altogether ſafe for Government to depend on the caprice of the military. Let them look to the Prætorian guards, and thence take a view of the Roman empire, to the Janiſſaries among the Turks, at different periods of hiſtory, and the various ſudden revolutions which the ſoldiers have effected in all military countries. Should this Bill once paſs, there would be an end of all freedom of debate, an end of enquiry into the conduct of Miniſters, and an end of every means of obtaining redreſs of grievances from the Executive Government. The Miniſter would no longer have to call for that blind confidence which had been ſo repeatedly demanded of late, and ſo imprudently given; he would be in the fulleſt poſſeſſion of every ſpecies of authority to enforce whatever acts he pleaſed to introduce and get paſſed. The confidence which had been given to him, had led to the waſte of ſo much blood and treaſure; and if we continued the war, and continued to deprive the people of the only bleſſings they enjoy, we ſhould go on, from extreme to extreme, till, inſtead of quelling our enemies abroad by famine, we ſhould, by famine and oppreſſion at home, provoke the people to actual rebellion. He therefore proteſted publickly againſt the Bill, becauſe he could not bear to ſee thoſe principles ripped up by the roots on which the Government had ſo long ſtood and flouriſhed.

Lord Mornington ſaid, that the circumſtances which conſtituted the neceſſity for the preſent meaſure, and the applicability and competency of the meaſure to the urgency of the caſe, ſtruck him ſo forcibly that he was ſurpriſed ſo much difference of opinion

had

had arisen upon it; he would therefore endeavour, not without hopes of success, to explain it distinctly to the House.

The whole scope of the case resolved itself in his mind into three distinct heads of consideration. The first was, did there exist an evil of magnitude sufficient to call for some remedy? Next, was there power in the law, as it stood, adequate to the evil? And, thirdly, was the Bill under consideration competent to meet the evil, or did it exceed the degree of power necessary for that purpose? On the second and third of these questions much had already been said; he would therefore confine himself to the first chiefly; and he hoped to make it appear, that there was not to be found, in the whole records of history, any one case that called so loudly for the interference of Parliament. Much difference of opinion respecting the meetings lately held had prevailed, and the outrageous assault on that part of the Constitution which the House was particularly called on to guard and protect. Upon this Gentlemen had spoken, each, according to the impression his mind had received, and each referring to a cause correspondent to that impression. One Honourable Gentleman had said, that it was an accidental outrage. Let the House consider whether it would be possible to persuade the nation, that the Sovereign was insulted, and personally assaulted in his way to Parliament by accident, or, in other words, without cause or motive. Gentlemen had corrected themselves, and said, that it was not owing to accident, but to a plot of the Government, in order to propagate an opinion of the disloyalty of the nation.

In contradiction of those two suppositions, some gentlemen had said, (and for that purpose entered into a critical analysis of the King's Speech,) that Ministers had endeavoured to prove that the loyalty of the nation was never so high as at present, as if they were determined to contradict their first, second and third assertions. At the same moment they had further declared, that it wasowing neither to accident nor to a plot of Government, but to the feelings of the people, irritated by an unsuccessful war, and a scarcity of bread. On these different assertions, loose and contradictory as they were, he would say but few words. An Honourable Gentleman had asked, did it ever before happen, that the sacred person of the Sovereign was so outraged? To this he would answer, that if it never did happen before, if the minds and character of the people were so changed and brutalized, was not the House to look for some other cause, and enquire what that dark motive could be, that armed the people against their Sovereign? And would not that enquiry lead them, by natural and obvious steps, to those societies, whose existence,

even

even the ſcepticiſm of the warmeſt oppoſers of the Bill could not deny, and whoſe whole tranſactions were obviouſly founded on principles that led directly to the act already commemorated.

His Lordſhip ſaid, he would not refer to former proceedings, or the report of the Secret Committee, nor would he advert to the trials of the ſuppoſed conſpirators, but would content himſelf with intreating the Houſe to recollect, what the principles of thoſe ſocieties had been, ſimply as matters of fact, and what their own opinions reſpecting them were, at the beginning of the year 1795, when they renewed the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act. Having deſired gentlemen to keep theſe points continually in memory, he would further beg their attention while he took a view of the tranſactions of the ſocieties ſince that time; as they came under the obſervation, not only of himſelf, but of every one, and were taken from authority not to be doubted; their own writings and publications.

At the concluſion of laſt Seſſion, his Lordſhip ſaid, he had hopes that what had happened in France, the miſchiefs which had ariſen to the people of that country, from the wild principle that every individual had a right to ſhare in the ſovereignty, and that it was a violation of that right to admit of any qualification of property in election; that the dreadful examples of the bad conſequences ariſing to all, even to the loweſt orders of the people of that unhappy country, from that principle, and (to uſe the words of the deteſtable Robeſpierre) from the "deſpotiſm of liberty," would have had ſome influence on the minds of people, and prevented the farther progreſs of the ſame ruinous principles among them; that it would have occurred to them, how very few of all thoſe who roſe from the dregs of ſociety, and rioted in the blood and treaſure of the nobility and gentry of France, had come to ſuch an end as to leave them juſt objects of envy; how many of them followed each to the ſcaffold, immediately on the heels of thoſe they murdered; and how many of thoſe who died a violent death ſuffered in their memory; how many that ſtood at the higheſt pinnacle of elevation on one day, were hurried on the next to the guillotine. He had hopes, he ſaid, that theſe glaring effects of the French Revolution would have brought to the minds of thoſe who were engaged in deep adventures here, that, though ſuch men might have a temporary proſperity, that proſperity muſt neceſſarily be ſhort, and that their fall would be more rapid than their riſe. Full fraught with theſe hopes, he had given his aſſent to ſuffering the expiration of the act for ſuſpending the

the Habeas Corpus act; but most grievously was he disappointed in his hopes; for he found that the Parliament was scarcely prorogued, before those societies again recommenced their former practices upon the public mind, with increased activity, and additional vigour; so far from being deterred by the awful and formidable examples which France afforded them in the successive cutting off of her successive usurpers, they flattered themselves that they should rather have the good fortune of those few demagogues who had escaped the guillotine, than the fate of those who had fallen victims to their unjustifiable usurpation, and disproportionate ambition; again held general meetings, and again developed their designs in publications, which stated "that they had suffered a storm; that their vessel was endangered, but now had put to sea with greater prospect of success than ever; that they had the satisfaction to see their principles actively propagating among their countrymen; and that their numbers multiplied at the rate of 150 new members in a week, and sometimes 70 or 80 in a day." It seems as if the whole of the British nation were convened on this extraordinary occasion; for, upon their own declaration, they had renewed their system, and increased the means of propagating their doctrines. They had told the people what they were to expect from inertness, and what from supplication, and exclaimed, "How long, O foolish countrymen, will you call upon Hercules!" The meaning of which was easy to be understood.

His Lordship said, that he must again request Gentlemen to keep constantly in their view the principle disclosed by those societies previous to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus act. That principle was adhered to with additional zeal, and the spirit of enforcing it was so far encreased, that the House would find these societies criticising and condemning the constitution of France as an imperfect system; inasmuch as the principle of equality had been abandoned; because, in the formation of that constitution, property had been made a necessary qualification in electors, and the right of unlimited universal suffrage had been abandoned. The better to carry their plans into execution, they affected to adopt a pacific system, declaring, as their resolutions stated, "That they did not mean to demand rights with arms, but by certain measures, in such a nature, that the House of Commons *must* accede to them; and that if any despaired of obtaining a Reform, and looked for that to riot, they would tell them, that it was not riot that could bring about that revolution which every one must wish for." This pacific system, however, was only to be continued, provided the Parliament would voluntarily submit

to

to the abſurd and extravagant doctrines of Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments, which was neither more nor leſs than a complete ſurrender of the Conſtitution. The ignorance of the lower claſſes of the people, who, through prejudice and bad habits, ſtill nurſed and cheriſhed a regard for artificial diſtinctions, which they propoſed in time to remove, theſe new legiſlators ſtated to be the prop of the Conſtitution; and this ignorance they propoſed to remove, in order that the Conſtitution might fall; and this happy accompliſhment, this general illumination, they declare, is only to be affected by cheap publications, circulated in different channels to the people, the expences of which were to be defrayed from the revenue of the ſociety, and any perſon who choſe to take up the trade of a bookſeller, and aſſiſt in the publication of them, was to be encouraged. His Lordſhip ſaid, he would ſhew the Houſe what ſort of light this illumination threw around them; and in doing ſo, he would ſpeak of three ſocieties concerned in this negotiation; the London Correſponding Society, the Society of the Friends of Liberty, and the London Reforming Society. He aſſured them, he would not quote a ſingle word but from books ſold by the printers and bookſellers of thoſe ſocieties; printers and bookſellers not only employed, but recommended by them, and called patriot bookſellers; in whoſe hands, moreover, the petition of the meeting at Copenhagen-houſe was left for the purpoſe of receiving ſignatures. The tenor of the books from which he quoted, was neither more nor leſs than to excite the poor to ſeize the landed property of the kingdom; to ſtir up the ſoldiery to mutiny; to degrade and debaſe the naval and military character, and ſtigmatize every naval and military ſucceſs as a misfortune; to repreſent the adminiſtration of juſtice as corrupt from its very ſource, and the Judges as venal and influenced by the King and his Miniſters; to mark the Nobility as a degraded race, and to invite the people to ſtrike them from their ſeats; to repreſent monarchy as a burthen, and an hereditary monarchy as uſeleſs, abſurd, and founded on falſe principles, and to take every opportunity of ridiculing the perſon of our Sovereign with the moſt immoderate licentiouſneſs; to recommend regicide, as he would preſently undertake to ſhew, to blaſpheme the ſcriptures, and revile religion, as acceſſaries to the ſyſtem which they condemn as ruinous, oppreſſive, and corrupt; and laſtly, to decry the eſtabliſhed Church and Conſtitution, till they had wrought the people to that pitch of frantic rage, that would inevitably end in their pulling down the pillar of the State, and burying the whole fabrick in one undiſtinguiſhable maſs of ruin.

His Lordſhip proceeded to read the publications alluded to in elucidation of the propoſitions before ſtated; and firſt, he read from a pamphlet, "that the landed property of the country was originally got by conqueſt, or by encroachment on the property of the people; and as thoſe *public robbers*, who had ſo obtained its poſſeſſion, had ſhewn no moderation in the uſe of it, it would not be fit to neglect the precious opportunity of recovering their rights. A few hearty fellows, with arms, &c. might take poſſeſſion of the whole; a particular committee be appointed to receive it: all the poſſeſſors be called upon to deliver up to that committee their writings and documents, in order to be burned; and the owners be made to diſgorge the laſt payment of their tenants, in order to form a fund for *good citizens*; and if the ariſtocracy aroſe in reſiſtance, let the people be firm, and diſpatch them, cutting them off root and branch." This, his Lordſhip obſerved, was publiſhed by a bookſeller and printer, at whoſe houſe the Copenhagen-houſe Petition of the 12th of November lay to be ſigned.

One paſſage more his Lordſhip thought it neceſſary to read, as it contained *a direct incitement to regicide.* It was a definition of a guillotine, "An inſtrument (as they called it) of rare invention." As it is the cuſtom, (obſerve, ſaid his Lordſhip, the levity and even ribaldry, mixed with cruelty, and recommendation of crime, that has diſtinguiſhed all the French revolutionary writings,) as it is the cuſtom to decapitate and not hang Kings, it is proper to have this inſtrument ready, to make death eaſy to them, ſuppoſing a neceſſity of cutting them off. This inſtrument is uſed only for great malefactors, ſuch as Kings, Biſhops, and Prime Miniſters. England and France have had their regular turns in executing their Kings; France did it laſt, &c. &c. and in concluſion, ſaid his Lordſhip, "Ankerſtroem and Damiens, the two regicides, are held up to the reverence of mankind." This too, is from a printer, given to the public by the ſocieties, in the liſt of *patriotic printers.*

[Name him, name him, came from all parts of the Houſe.]

Citizen Lee, ſaid his Lordſhip.

What, continued his Lordſhip, can the Houſe now ſuppoſe is the tendency of this pacific ſyſtem, this bloodleſs conqueſt? Sir, would it not be ſuppoſed, that, inſtead of being the production of Engliſhmen, this foul, moſt foul treaſon—[Hear! hear! from the oppoſite ſide.]

I do not ſay, continued his Lordſhip, that if brought in the judgment of a court, it would be decided to be treaſon: but I will maintain, that the heart that uttered it was the heart of as foul a traitor

as

as ever raiſed the dagger of a parricide. It is not even Engliſh treaſon—No, ſir; it is all French treaſon. Would not one rather ſuppoſe that I was reading the bloody page of Marat, or the ſanguinary code of Robeſpierre, than the production of an Engliſhman. On his own knowledge, his Lordſhip ſaid, he could venture to ſtate, unequivocally, that a production entitled *King-killing*, and another, *the Reign of George the Laſt*, were ſold at Copenhagen-houſe. Under ſuch impreſſions as theſe, did the perſons aſſembled go there to diſcuſs political ſubjects? There the preſent ſcarcity was attributed, not to failure of crops, but to parliamentary corruption. His Lordſhip wiſhed the Houſe to conſider what the effect of ſuch topics on minds ſo prepared muſt have been. This was not all that had paſſed. The people were taught that they had no hope left from legiſlative or executive powers, but that they were to look to themſelves alone; ſince they could hope for no redreſs from the conſtituted authorities. His Lordſhip deſcribed the outrage on his Majeſty at the time he was paſſing to his Parliament in colours calculated to make a forcible impreſſion on the mind; a ſight, which, at another time, had been finely deſcribed by his Right Honourable Friend, (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) as peculiarly gratifying, becauſe it was the ſureſt pledge of the order and harmony of the State.

One circumſtance more remained to be mentioned, which was, that when all the nation was in conſternation and horror at this event, a printer had the audacity to publiſh a libel, in which the whole of the circumſtances were miſrepreſented, to excite the ridicule and contempt of the people. He left it to the conſideration of the Houſe to determine from theſe indiſputable facts whether there was not a plain, obvious, and clear connexion between the ſocieties and that outrage. It had been ſaid, that this was a libel upon Engliſhmen, who have been educated in rational freedom, and could never be ſo loſt to the ſenſe of their intereſt as to violate the bleſſings they enjoy. Would the Honourable Gentleman, who aſſerted this, deny that other free nations have ſuffered by the diſſemination of theſe doctrines, that America, and more particularly Geneva, were not injured by them? Be it remembered that revolutions are frequent with Republican governments; in Geneva, it was true, that ſuch evils were leſs likely in conſequence of their habits of order and religion. The only revolution which had been marked with blood there, and where the prieſts were murdered, was the late one. A celebrated author (d'Ivernois) ſpeaking upon this ſubject, had well expreſſed himſelf, that the Ge-

nevefe did but touch the poifon and their hearts were corrupted. The fmallnefs of the numbers who entertained thefe opinions was alfo an objection; but let the Honourable Gentleman recollect, that the number of thofe were fmall who accomplifhed the French Revolution, who brought about the maffacres of the 10th of Auguft and 2d of September; and they were fmall too in their numbers who caufed the commotions in Geneva. Would you, he afked, becaufe the conftitutions of the people of England are ftrong, feed them with poifon? His Lordfhip declined entering on the difcuffion of the remaining points; he had however felt himfelf bound by his duty to the Houfe and to the public, to ftate thus much; and he left it to others, who were bleffed with better health and more vigour, to deal with the other parts of the fubject.

Mr Sheridan faid, it had not been his intention to take part in the debate; he had propofed to leave it to Gentlemen who were better prepared, and who might not yet have had an opportunity of delivering their opinions. Some things, however, had fallen from the noble Lord, upon which it was impoffible for him to remain filent; although he could neither pretend to the talents or the ability of the noble Lord to anfwer him as he could wifh; nor had he the advantage of fo much deliberation, and of fo much preparation too, as was manifeft by the arrangement of the noble Lord's fpeech. He was happy, however, to find, that inferior as he was to the noble Lord, one of his predictions had been fulfilled. When he made his motion for a Committee of Enquiry, he foretold that if the Right Honourable Gentleman oppofite would not fuffer him to obtain that Committee of Enquiry, Gentlemen would ftart up with lines and fcraps of pamphlets, with paragraphs and hand-bills in battle array againft him; and he expected that they would bring up the rear with prints and cuts ftill more alarming and formidable. He paid no credit, however, to their affertions, and was refolved to give none; and if he were to fingle out any perfon from the crowd, without the infinuation of a perfonal affront, he fhould declare that the noble Lord was the leaft entitled to his credit: exactly that time two years ago, with the fame unequal talents, and with the fame unequal preparations alfo, he had in fome degree refuted the affertions of that noble Lord. Exactly two years ago, at the opening of the Seffion of Parliament, he remembered to have feen the noble Lord with the fame fonorous voice, the fame placid countenance, in the fame attitude, leaning gracefully upon the table, and giving an account from fhreds and patches of Briffot, that the French Republic would laft but a few months longer. Unfortunately

nately for the credit of the noble Lord, not one word of all his predictions had come to paſs. On the contrary, France had continued the war, long after the noble Lord's predictions had foretold its period, with aſtoniſhing ſucceſs, and had experienced conſiderable proſperity. Twice had the noble Lord propheſied in vain. What reliance then could be placed upon the aſſurances of a perſon, whoſe former aſſertions the event had in every inſtance falſified, and whoſe prophecies had, in every inſtance, proved falſe? How, in common ſenſe, ſhould he treat them, but with deriſion and contempt? He believed the noble Lord was as much in the right in predicting that a revolution would follow, from the proceedings of certain ſocieties, as he had been in his former predictions, of the rapidly approaching ruin and deſtruction of the French Republic. The arguments the noble Lord had made uſe of, to prove the connection between the proceedings of the London Correſponding Society, and the *accidental* outrage that had been offered to the perſon of the Sovereign, neither dazzled his ſight nor ſatisfied his underſtanding. In fact, he did not believe there was any more connection between the two, than he could admit there was any connection between the noble Lord's ſpeech and the queſtion in debate.

The more cloſely to follow the noble Lord through the whole of his elaborate compoſition, he would begin with his firſt argument, that ſuch an inſult as that offered to his Majeſty, on the firſt day of the preſent Seſſion of Parliament, had never been before attempted. He moſt ſincerely wiſhed the fact were otherwiſe; but, unfortunately there had been, to the diſgrace of the loyalty of the people, he believed, many inſtances of ſimilar miſconduct, among which, he mentioned one that took place at the Middleſex election. Aſſuming this as an hiſtorical fact, which was not true, the noble Lord had endeavoured to eſtabliſh the proofs of his connection; and, after examining a variety of cauſes, none of which could in his mind at all apply; he ſaid, he looked about for another cauſe, and found one novel and extraordinary, namely, the ſocieties. Surely the noble Lord had forgotten, that long before his Majeſty's proceſſion to Parliament, and long before the meeting at Copenhagen-houſe, there were tumults and diſorders in various parts of the kingdom, which he believed the noble Lord, with all his ingenuity, could not be able to faſten on the ſocieties. Other riots, other tumults, other inſurrections, had been frequent in almoſt every county throughout England; and his Majeſty's troops had often been called upon, to ſhed the blood of his Majeſty's ſubjects, who had been guilty of riot and diſturbance, on account of the diſtreſs and famine ariſing from

the war. In thofe tranfactions clearly there could be no connection; indeed it had not once been argued nor infinuated, that any of thofe diftreffed people who committed outrages, to appeafe the clamour of their ftarving families, were incited to it by the London Correfponding Society, or were any way connected with it. He fhould therefore differ from the noble Lord upon that point, and attribute the outrage to no other caufe than the preffure of extreme diftrefs. Mr. Sheridan faid, he refpected his Majefty as much as the noble Lord, and entertained as high an efteem for his many amiable virtues: but, in proportion as he refpected his Majefty, he refpected the law alfo; the King was not above the law, and confequently he could not confent to fo violent a meafure as the prefent Bill. Might not men, returning home to their ftarving families, which they were not able to fupport, from the extreme irritation of the moment, and the delufion of confounding the acts of the Minifter with the authority of the Monarch, be guilty of outrages which they would repent of in their cooler moments? This was no extravagant argument. It had been the caufe which produced one diftrefs, and was capable of producing another.

The noble Lord had indignantly fpoken of theoretical difcourfes and debates upon Government, and had bitterly inveighed againft political topics in focieties, and againft fpeeches on fpeculative points in politics. He had dwelt particularly upon the circumftance of fome perfons alluring their auditors with a fhew of entertainment, and making them pay for it fixpence a-piece. In fact, the fpeech of the noble Lord himfelf had been entirely a theoretical lecture on politics, and a fpecimen of the very fort of difcourfe which he had reprobated. For his own part, he had not experienced much entertainment from it, and he certainly would not have given fixpence to hear it. One mode of argument had been ufed that night, which he could not affent to; the noble Lord had reprefented the lower claffes of the people of all countries to be alike. This was a grofs mifreprentation. Nothing could be more falfe and abfurd, than to fuppofe, that a people, bred up in a free country, and living in the habits of enjoying and confidering their rights; that a people like the people of England, would ever conduct themfelves like flaves juft refcued from a vile, grinding, and infamous defpotifm. The noble Lord had mentioned the Republic of Geneva; would he compare the people of that miferable State, always fubject to the domination of Savoy or France, from whom it received fuch a Conftitution as thofe countries thought proper to dictate—would he compare that people with the inhabitants of the

great,

great, the proud, and the powerful British nation? He had read the account of the late Revolution in Geneva, alluded to by the noble Lord; and he was personally acquainted with its author, Mr. d'Ivernois, whose name he mentioned with respect. It was possible, however, that that Gentleman might be a little biassed in his history; for he at this time received a pension from his Majesty's Ministers.

The noble Lord had also made a comparison with America; what was there in America, except a safe, wise, and prosperous people, and an admirable President? What had been the effect? Had not the American States avoided a quarrel with this country, and made an advantageous treaty with us? Had they not preserved their Constitution and their liberties? Did not their commerce flourish? Were they not safe, happy, free, and prosperous? By what mode of argument then would the noble Lord make use of the insinuation of the American States, to prove the danger to which we were liable in this country, from the publication and dissemination of these new principles? They who accused the English people of treason and rebellion, who charged them with being prone to commit outrages and excesses, were not judges of the sort of stuff and material of which the human heart was made; and particularly an Englishman's, when they hazarded such assertions. The reason of their ignorance was plain; because, from their own natural pride, they had always kept aloof from the people, and were now obliged to do so in consequence of the calamitous war they had engaged in, and the disastrous consequences it had produced. Hence, because six or seven people, as ignorant of human nature and the hearts of Englishmen, as the Minister, had stupidly imagined, that they could do this, and that, and t'other, and electrify the whole nation by a few violent pamphlets, they were taught to believe, that a great body of people is in a state of actual rebellion. It was impossible to presume to doubt the ignorance of those men, when they acted in the same parallel with men in high situations.

The House could not, ought not, to give credit to such a mass of matter as had that night been brought before them. The noble Lord had affirmed that it was foul treason which had been published by Citizen Lee. If it was foul treason, why did not the Attorney General prosecute Citizen Lee? and what stronger power did he require for that purpose, than what the law had already armed him with? The noble Lord had voted for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, now he wished this Bill to pass, and yet no

no perſon whatever had been proſecuted. The noble Lord was indignant alſo, becauſe his Honourable and Learned Friend had expreſſed his diſapprobation at the unfair attempt to divide the rich, and ſet them in array againſt the poor; and yet this diviſion will, and muſt, be the neceſſary conſequence of the meaſures which the Miniſters are purſuing. They who hold out the maſs of the poor to be capable of ſuch enormities as the French have perpetrated, do, in fact, ſet the rich againſt them; and the conſequence muſt be, that the poor will be ſtung and goaded on to acts of reſentment. The noble Lord had read a pamphlet, or an extract from a pamphlet, laying down a ſcheme for an attack upon property; when ſuch alarms were given, every man knew that additional proviſions would be enacted, and additional penal laws be made, againſt ſuch depredations. He would re-aſſert that thoſe who argued in that manner, libelled the people. The noble Lord had read, and read again, his ſcraps and paragraphs, whilſt his honourable friends cheered him at every period; but how did they cheer him? While he was detailing the particulars of this foul and horrible treaſon, they cheered him with laughter; and, inſtead of expreſſing their regret at the dangers with which they were threatened, they did not even hear of them with gravity. If they did not conſent to go into the proofs of this treaſon before a Committee of Enquiry, he was warranted in pronouncing that they had no right whatever to aſſent to or ſupport the Bill. If they were content with bare aſſertion, he would aſſert alſo and deny that Citizen Lee was printer to the ſocieties; and he challenged them to the proof of the contrary. He might put his ſignature to the pamphlets which he choſe to publiſh; but was that proof? Good God! he ſuppoſed they would exclaim, Who can doubt a printer's veracity? As to the doctrine of KING-KILLING, he knew the majority of the people held it in univerſal deteſtation; but if a fool, a madman, or a traitor, as ignorant as the Miniſters, believed ſuch ſentiments were popular, was it to be deemed a ſufficient proof of their exiſtence?

It was not difficult, Mr. Sheridan ſaid, to ſee the views with which theſe pretended plots againſt the life of his Majeſty were brought forward. Miniſters wiſhed to ſeize upon the loyal mind of the Engliſh nation, and raiſe groundleſs alarms. He had twice in that Houſe mentioned the bow and arrow, or pop-gun plot, as it was termed. Miniſters, he maintained, had kept in priſon the perſons accuſed of it, whom they knew to be innocent. They had offered to liberate them upon giving bail. If theſe perſons were innocent,

innocent, why were they ſuffered to lie in priſon? If they were guilty, or if there was any reaſonable cauſe of ſuſpecting them to be guilty, of the foul and wicked crime with which they were charged, why had the officers of juſtice liberated them on bail? Was it poſſible that the Houſe could be ſatisfied with the miſerable proofs adduced by the noble Lord? The noble Lord had been looking for plots with the utmoſt diligence and induſtry, but he could find none. Would the Houſe decide the moſt important ſubject ever offered to their conſideration, upon vile ſcraps, and paltry paſſages from pamphlets, collected by rummaging old book ſhops, and turning up the dirt of every ſtall in London? Good God! in what place was it that he ſpoke? To whom did he addreſs himſelf? How would the Members of that Houſe face their Conſtituents, after ſacrificing every thing held valuable by their anceſtors, if they ſhould agree to make that ſacrifice without all the information, and all the proofs, which the nature of the caſe would admit? What might convince them, might not have the ſame effect upon others. They ſhould conſider that they were all of them the ſervants of the people of England. They voted and acted in that Houſe not in their individual capacity, but as agents and attornies for others; and they would not perform their duty, if they could not ſatisfy the reaſonable enquiries of their Conſtituents.

This meaſure he was ſatisfied would create that diſaffection, and encourage thoſe plots, the ſuppoſed exiſtence of which was made the pretext for its adoption. He deprecated nothing more than a Revolution; but he believed it was not impoſſible that the people might be driven to ſome violent remedy, rendered by circumſtances plauſible, if not neceſſary. He apprehended little from the temper and diſcontent of the people, except this Bill provoked their anger and their indignation. It might create diſcontents, and render a remedy deſperate as theirs would be whenever they were driven to it, both plauſible and neceſſary. The conduct of the ſocieties he conſidered himſelf bound to defend, becauſe the ſocieties were the objects of general obloquy and clamour; and as to the induſtrious and working part of the community, he reminded the Houſe that they had never been unfaithful. An Honourable and Learned Gentleman near him (the Attorney General) with tears in his eyes, had expreſſed his deſire that his ſon ſhould enjoy thoſe honours and emoluments which he had obtained ſolely by his induſtry; to which Mr. Sheridan ſaid, he muſt add, by his great talents alſo, and an unblemiſhed character. Let that Honourable Gentleman look to the ſituation of a man, who, with the ſcanty income

income of 9s. a week, at the rate bread is at, returns home to a wife and family of four or five children, in a miſerable lodging, and judge of his feelings. Miniſters are ſecure in their penſions and places, and are therefore inſenſible of theſe hardſhips. Be it remembered, however, that the Britiſh nation is a grateful nation; and let Gentlemen poſſeſſed of eſtates, the merchants and manufacturers, who heard him, recollect whether they had ever ſeen a poor labouring man unthankful in his return for their bounty. It was not in the nature or the heart of Engliſhmen. If Government were bounteous, they would not find the people diſſatisfied. He regretted the bad ſituation to which the country might be reduced by it, but he rejoiced that he had done every thing in his power to prevent it.

Mr. Secretary Dundas ſaid, he roſe not from an idea that his abilities would give additional weight to the arguments that had been adduced in favour of the Bill; but his ſituation in the country was ſuch as to convince him, that he ought not to ſhrink at a moment when he heard dangerous and unconſtitutional doctrines groundleſsly attributed to Adminiſtration. So far from feeling that the rights, liberties, and happineſs of the people of this country would be invaded by the preſent Bill, he felt and was convinced, that the rights, liberty, and happineſs of the people, could not be effectually preſerved to them, if ſome ſuch meaſure as the preſent were not immediately adopted. In his opinion, if ſome meaſure were not adopted, the Houſe would criminally neglect the ſafety of the Conſtitution; they would neither perform their duty, nor anſwer the expectations of the country. Impreſſed with this feeling, he was unwilling to give a ſilent vote. Before he came to the principal queſtion, however, he would diſcuſs one or two preliminary points. He reprobated the idea of an Honourable Gentleman, who had in a ſtrange manner charged the higher orders of the people with intending to ſeparate their intereſts from thoſe of the lower claſs; ſuch an accuſation, he heſitated not to declare, a groſs calumny. If ever there was a country in which theſe claſſes were united; where, from the humbleſt cottager to the Monarch on the Throne, all the intermediate ranks of ſociety were cemented and connected by one continued chain, each giving aſſiſtance to the others, it was the country in which we live. To aſſert that a ſeparation between the rich and the poor had taken place, or ever would take place, was, he repeated it, a groſs calumny. The union of theſe orders appeared from the connection between maſter and ſervant, landlord and tenant, and above all from the innumerable charities that were every where eſtabliſhed, from the parochial rates, and from various other benevolent inſtitutions, which would

would prove to the people that they were under the peculiar care of those whom Providence in its goodness had placed over them, nor did the statute book contain an exception to this rule of general benevolence. This very calumny against the higher orders of society formed a part of that dangerous system, against which they were called upon to protect the country. The Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) had stated several facts to the House: he would not dispute the powers of eloquence with which that Hon. Gentleman had dressed them; but he would assert that they were the Honourable Gentleman's own creation, and had no existence but in his imagination. He did not mean to say that the war had not occasioned some calamities. But he begged leave to say distinctly, that whatever were the calamities of the war, and all wars were naturally productive of calamities, and whatever were the evils resulting from the scarcity, which he admitted God had been pleased to visit the country with the last year, they could not be accounted the causes of the general scarcity, nor could it be proved that they had given rise to the opinions he so much reprobated as mischievous and baneful.

What was the state of the country in the years 1791 and 1792? Where then was either war or scarcity? The nation was in the most happy and flourishing condition, insomuch, that at that time they were taking off the taxes that had been laid upon the people. Yet was it not equally true, that then, as at present, these principles had broken out, and manifested their operation in a progressive course of sedition? It was evident, therefore, that these were but pretexts, tending to inflame and agitate the humbler classes of the community. The wants of the lower orders had received the best alleviations from the attention of the wealthy in their own districts; and though it was not so much his habit to talk of them as it was of other Gentlemen, yet he could feel the sufferings of the poor, and admit their claims as extensively as any man. Among other arguments urged against the Bill, it had been contended that it was contrary to the Bill of Rights, and that the Bill of Rights was invaded by it. He denied that there was any thing in that memorable and sacred declaration of our liberties, more than in any Act of Parliament, which in any way barred them from taking the present measures; nothing that prevented them from revising, altering, or suspending its provisions, as the weighty exigencies of the times might demand. Perhaps there was something in the Riot Act that was not strictly reconcileable with the Bill: the *Habeas Corpus* too, in its suspension, stood upon a similar footing with the present measure. By the Bill of Rights they were allowed to wear defensive arms: there was no doubt of it; a man

might do ſo; and yet the Government had ſince, by the authority of ſalutary and well-timed ſtatutes, diſarmed whole diſtricts in the northern part of the kingdom; and he never could allow himſelf to forget that the reſtriction of this privilege had been extended throughout whole counties. Venerating, as he did, almoſt to idolatry, thoſe anceſtors to whom we were indebted for the Bill of Rights, ſupremely valuable as that recognition of the rights of the people was, it was obtained by the demand of the Houſes of Parliament, and it had been obtained by the Parliament only. He ſaw now, however, principles of action far different from thoſe which governed the illuſtrious leaders of that Glorious Revolution, actuating and impelling thoſe Gentlemen who continually profeſs their admiration of that event. The great patriots of that day were accuſtomed to look for the ſafeguard of their liberties, their property, and their religion, only from the energy and wiſdom of Parliament; whereas the modern doctrine was that every good was to be expected from popular aſſemblies. It was objected to the Bill, that it prevented the right of petitioning; ſo far from preventing the right of petitioning, it in fact ſecured it by directing it to its proper channel. Whatever good had been done by petitioning, he would venture to aſſert, had been entirely done by petitions under the protection of eſtabliſhed laws, and not by tumultuous meetings; ſuch meetings might produce anarchy, but they could never be advantageous to the Conſtitution. If Gentlemen would reflect on the caſes in which petitions had tended to ſecure the liberty of the people, they would find that they had not originated from popular conventions irregularly held, but from legal aſſemblies called together by conſtituted authorities. The petitions preſented on the Exciſe Bill and the India Bill were ſufficient proofs of this. He deprecated the idea of inſinuating ſuſpicions of improper conduct in magiſtrates, and ſaid it tended materially to weaken the neceſſary authority of men in public ſituations. With regard to popular meetings, the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) had, he ſaid, ſtood forward more frequently than any other political character in appeals to the people. He had diſplayed the moſt extraordinary willingneſs to reſort to them; ſo that it frequently happened, that he was without the door of the Houſe, attacking Miniſters with invective and aſperity one half of the day, where they had no means of defending themſelves, and during the other half combating them within thoſe walls with the moſt determined inveteracy. At one time, in order to excite the indignation of the public againſt Miniſters, for their proſecution of the American war, the Right Honourable Gentleman had diſplayed his oratorical

talents

talents on a ftage erected for that purpofe in Weftminfter-Hall, with as little effect, however, as to the avowed purport of his defign at that time, as there was ground to apprehend would be the cafe with refpect to his exertions on a late occafion. Yet it had happened, that he was induced, no doubt, from confcientious motives, to acknowledge the virtues, and connect himfelf with the political conduct of thofe whom he had reprobated for fo many years with every poffible bitternefs and feverity.

Immediately after he had withdrawn himfelf from the Adminiftration of the Earl of Shelburne, the Right Honourable Gentleman had again appealed to his favourite popular meeting, at which, no doubt, many individuals were vehemently affailed, who had no means of defending themfelves; a line of combat neither candid nor fair. Let the Houfe recollect the Affociations in the year 1780; Affociations, which, though commenced without any fettled defign, proved fatal in their confequences. Had the Bill before the Houfe exifted at that time, would the lives, liberty, and property of Englifhmen have been fo dreadfully violated, as they were in confequence of the meeting held in St. George's Fields? An unfortunate, but deluded, nobleman * had the audacity to fay, that, unlefs the Houfe of Commons acceded to the object of their Petition, he would require their affent at the head of 100,000 men. Since then they had experienced fuch a lamentable inftance of the dangers refulting from popular meetings; fince they had feen the evils which threatened the Conftitution from fuch combination, would they hefitate to pafs a Bill which could, in no view, be faid to take away the right of the fubject, and which only directed it to a proper object? They ought to take care how they played with the prejudices of a mob: they were not fafe weapons to fport with. Nothing could be more improper or more dangerous in a Legiflature, than to hold up the doctrine of refiftance to the people. That it was a rule to be laid down was by no means true, as refiftance never could form a part of Government. It muft arife from the diffolution of Government; nor could he avoid noticing the criminal indecency of imputing arbitrary motives to one part of the Government, calling upon the Legiflature, which was one Branch of Government, to liften to imputations upon another. Whatever might be the conduct of the Right Hon. Gentleman in the years 1782 and 1783, he well recollected, that from 1770 to 1774, he had not reforted to any means that the wifdom of Parliament did not fuggeft; though when he faid this, he was aware that there might be circumftances fuited to particular periods

* Lord George Gordon.

riods of a man's life, and maturer age might not chuſe to adopt the conduct of youth. The Right Hon. Gentleman, from his earlieſt knowledge of him, had been a friend to the ſyſtem of popular meetings; but he doubted much whether he had imbibed any good principle from that ſyſtem, or eſtabliſhed any good principle by it. A large aſſembly had been convened the other day, at which that Right Honourable Gentleman preſided, and he had no doubt he had exerted himſelf with great activity and uncommon powers of voice; but could the 30,000 people, who were reported to be preſent, have been all benefited by his greateſt exertion of his faculties. He had certainly been much applauded; had not thoſe, however, who were with him on the ſcaffold, ſhared in that applauſe? He declared he had always admired the Right Honourable Gentleman's talents, but he ſeriouſly thought they might be diſplayed more uſefully than on ſuch occaſions. That Houſe he conſidered as a more proper ſtage on which that Right Honourable Gentleman might diſplay his abilities. "I know (ſaid Mr. Dundas) he is able to battle us all." The Right Honourable Gentleman would act in a more manly manner, if he had any charge to make againſt perſons in Adminiſtration, to do it openly in the Houſe, and not to arraign the conduct of men, who, from being abſent, were unable to defend themſelves. If the majority of the 30,000, who attended the meeting where the Right Honourable Gentleman preſided, had remained at home in the exerciſe of honeſt induſtry, for the maintenance of their wives and children, it would, he was convinced, have been better for ſociety. The food dealt out to them from the roſtrum was not the moſt wholeſome; and, it was to be remembered, that ſuch as it was, the wives of the men preſent had not their ſhare of it.

If any good could come of theſe ſelf-conſtituted meetings, it would be by placing them under the eye of the Legiſlature. Indeed he had flattered himſelf, that after the trials of Hardy and others, the good ſenſe of the nation would have checked their further progreſs. But the meetings in St. George's Fields and Copenhagen-Houſe had diſſipated theſe hopes. Meetings of this kind would now therefore be placed under the direction of a magiſtrate acting at his peril.

To the aſſertion of Mr. Sheridan, that Miniſters had denied proof, he replied, that public notoriety was the beſt ground of proof; and the whole country had declared that ſome ſtrong and efficacious remedy was neceſſary. He put it to the wiſdom of the Houſe, whether, under all the exiſting circumſtances, it was right that any individual

ſhould

ſhould have the power of aſſembling people for any buſineſs he thought proper. Between truſting to the diſcretion of individuals on the one hand, and the diſcretion of the magiſtrate on the other, he could not ſee the ſmalleſt room to heſitate.

Mr. Fox ſaid, if he had much of that vanity, with reſpect to a conſciouſneſs of his talents and abilities, which the Right Honourable Gentleman had been pleaſed to impute to him, it would have been no ſmall gratification to ſuch feelings to have formed the ſubject of not merely one, or two, or three, but at leaſt four different ſpeeches, which he recollected the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) conſiderable in abilities himſelf, high in ſituation, and great in power, to have made upon his character and public conduct. On ſeveral occaſions, he remembered to have been publicly addreſſed from the ſame quarter, in a ſimilar ſtile of catechiſm, upon his opinion reſpecting the extent and mode of Reform in Parliament, and reſpecting his ſentiments upon the influence of the Crown and the proper limits of the Royal Prerogative. The Right Honourable Secretary had at that time received ſeveral hints from his Right Honourable Friend near him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) not to puſh his enquiries too far. On the preſent occaſion, however, he was not fortunate enough to reap the benefit of ſo kind a hint, and therefore he would anſwer the different queſtions in the catechiſm as well as he was able, and with all the plainneſs and ſincerity in his power. The Right Honourable Gentleman had thought proper to allude to an event in Parliament that was antecedent to his (Mr. Dundas) being a member of that Houſe; he meant the Middleſex election; the part that he had taken on that occaſion aroſe upon a queſtion of law, which was ſubmitted to the Houſe for its opinion, and he gave his opinion upon the ſubject as a member of that Houſe; but the Right Honourable Gentleman was deceived if he thought that he had ever ſaid one word on the point contrary to the general rights of the people to meet and diſcuſs every thing that related to their liberties, or was connected with their intereſts.

From the Middleſex election, the Right Hon. Gentleman had proceeded to catechiſe him on the ſubject of the American war, and by talking of his erecting a ſtage without doors, he ſeemed to ſpeak with ſome contempt of the manner in which he (Mr. Fox) had acted at certain meetings, that were held at Weſtminſter-Hall and other places, upon theſe occaſions: he found himſelf accuſed with having pronounced invectives againſt perſons who were then in high authority. The Right Hon. Gentleman had forgotten the conduct

conduct which his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Pitt) had adopted, and thofe eloquent fpeeches he had at that time delivered, in which public harangues to the people were defcribed as the moft agreeable and moft ufeful duty which Reprefentatives in Parliament could difcharge to their conftituents. In anfwer to the charge that he had, in a perfonal manner, attacked thofe who had no opportunity of appearing in their own defence, he had to fay, that it was the duty of every man, and particularly of every Member of Parliament, when the conduct of the Executive Government was called in queftion, to reprefent the characters and conduct of Members in their true colours. What was the ufe or the value of a popular meeting, upon a political fubject, without that freedom? At meetings held in Yorkfhire and other places at that time, fuch had been the practice of others. Although he had then fpoken freely of Government, when he oppofed its meafures, he was willing to allow others to oppofe him. In the year 1784, for inftance, the Houfe would recollect what had happened. Mr. Burke, in his emphatical language, had called the parliamentary conduct of fome Gentlemen the Revolution of 1784. In that year, the Houfe could not have forgotten how he had been oppofed; what invectives had been employed againft him, and thofe in places, where, as the Right Hon. Gentleman had faid, he could be prefent to anfwer. Did he ever make one unmanly murmur upon that occafion? Did he ever complain of that invective? Did he ever fay one word againft the facred rights of the people to affemble and freely difcufs political fubjects when thofe difcuffions were againft him? Who would fay he ever did? Never in any one inftance had he uttered a fyllable that went to queftion the right, or to blame the practice, of holding public meetings of the people. He had endeavoured to anfwer much of the reafoning that had been urged againft him at thefe meetings; but he had not faid a word againft the propriety of holding them. What was the principle of the prefent Bill? to reftrain the exercife of free difcuffion at all thofe meetings.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had afked, what advantages had refulted to the country from thofe political meetings during the American war? He did not mean to arrogate to himfelf any extraordinary fhare in the oppofition which he made to that war? It did not become him to fay much upon that fubject; he trufted he might however be pardoned, if he faid that the popular meetings in queftion tended to haften the conclufion of the war. Was the Right Hon. Gentleman of that opinion, or was he not? What did he think of the meetings that were held at Norwich and at other places?

places? Upon this, too, the Right Hon. Gentleman might have ſome information from one of his preſent friends*, if he wanted any information. Thoſe meaſures went further than to put an end to the war; they contributed to the correction of ſome of the abuſes of Adminiſtration, ſince the celebrated Bill of Mr. Burke, which did that Gentleman ſo much honour, was founded on thoſe meaſures. Perhaps he ſhould be told, that all the meetings that had any effect (indeed, he had been told ſo already,) were called by the Sheriff; and that all that was ſaid at the meeting at Weſtminſter had no effect, becauſe it was not a meeting which had that authority. He wiſhed to know what magic there was in a meeting that was called by the Sheriff, in preference to any other public meeting? So much of the ſubject, therefore, as related to public meetings, he recollected with pleaſure and ſatisfaction. Public meetings had contributed to put an end to the American war; and if he had ſaid ſome things againſt any of thoſe individuals who adviſed it, he was conſoled with the reflection, that if he had helped to ſhorten that deſtructive war only one year, he had contributed to prevent the increaſe of the number of helpleſs orphans and mourning widows: he had contributed to leſſen the diſtreſs of the poor and friendleſs. Let him not be told, then, that he had acted an unmanly part, by frequenting thoſe public meetings. He muſt again ſay, that if there was any glory in putting an end to the American war, he ſhould be proud to hear that he had, in common with others, a ſhare in that glory. When the Right. Hon. Gentleman talked of invectives thrown out at thoſe public meetings againſt perſons who were not preſent, he would recommend to him to reflect on what had happened the day before at the meeting at Palace-yard. He knew, and if neceſſary he could prove, that there had been manifeſted a good deal of zeal; in fact, an active canvaſs had taken place on the part of Miniſters, in order that their friends might attend that meeting. Meſſages were ſent about, ſtating that it would be agreeable to Government if their friends took care to be preſent. The conſequence was, an attendance was procured, and many friends to Government, perſons of authority, were there, among whom was his noble colleague, Lord Hood, and two Honourable Gentlemen in his eye (Meſſrs. Canning and Parkinſon); he hoped, therefore, the Right Hon. Gentleman would not complain that any attacks had been made on Miniſters in the abſence of their friends that day.

* Mr. Windham, the Secretary at War.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had alſo accuſed him of having altered his courſe for ſome years with regard to public meetings; that he had been fond of attending them in the earlier part of his parliamentary life, but that he had of late declined them; he admitted the obſervation to be founded in truth; the reaſon was, that for ſome time paſt he did not ſee that his attendance at public meetings could be of any uſe to the public: whenever he thought it might become ſo, he was ready to attend; and this he thought a part of his public duty, whatever opinions other perſons might entertain upon that ſubject. If ever ſuch attendance had been neceſſary, it was ſo at this time: when the Conſtitution was attacked, it was the duty of every man to exert himſelf in its defence: he ſhould therefore give all the authority he could pretend to to ſuch meetings, for the purpoſe of ſupporting the rights and liberties of the people. Avowing that for his motive, he was ready to meet any miniſterial cenſure that might be caſt upon him. The Right Hon. Gentleman had aſked him, if he thought that any efforts of his could be heard with attention? and whether he imagined he could make any impreſſion on ſuch a multitude as thirty thouſand? He had no ſuch idea; he had nevertheleſs uſed all his endeavours to explain to them the nature of the ſubject which they had to conſider. The Right Hon. Gentleman had alſo aſked whether he thought they applauded him? His anſwer was, that he was not ſo vain as to expect it; he attended not for the purpoſe of receiving applauſe, or commanding aſſent; he went for the purpoſe of learning the ſenſe of his conſtituents on the moſt important political topic which could be preſented for their deliberation. It was, he confeſſed, ſomewhat unpleaſant, particularly at his time of life, to attend popular meetings; the labour and fatigue, however, he conſidered as the mereſt trifles, when compared with the fate of the queſtion which had been ſubmitted to the inhabitants of Weſtminſter, whoſe applauſe at the meeting aroſe from the feeling which thoſe preſent had of the propriety of the meaſure they were met to adopt. This aroſe out of the deteſtation they felt for the Bill before the Houſe. In that view he ſaw the utility of ſuch meetings, and it was on that ground that he attended them. At that meeting the Bill met what it ought to meet, and what, if the public had any regard for their liberties, it would meet all over the kingdom, general execration and abhorrence: execration that would be increaſed in conſequence of certain opinions that had been lately delivered in that Houſe. The more the public had that feeling (which, thank God, he exclaimed, they began to manifeſt), the more he thought it his duty

to give ſuch meetings his countenance; meetings on which, perhaps, depended at this moment the very eſſence of our Conſtitution. That was his firm and ſincere opinion; and that he believed to be the opinion of the public; for very plain and very decided language muſt at this moment be ſpoken to ſave the country from ruin.

The Right Hon. Gentleman had been pleaſed to pay him compliments on his talents, and had intimated a wiſh that they ſhould never be exerciſed any where but in that Houſe: to this he would anſwer, that he attended that Houſe not for pleaſure, but for duty; and he truſted that his attendance there might be more or leſs uſeful to the public; of how much uſe it was, it did not become him to determine. The Right Hon. Gentleman then aſked, if he expected to convince that great multitude by his eloquence? Moſt certainly he did not; as little did he expect to convince that Houſe. It had been ſaid, that the majority of that multitude came pre-determined; perhaps they did. Did the majority of that Houſe come wholly undetermined? Was there no reſemblance between the Houſe and that meeting in that reſpect? He had ſome experience of the Houſe; and whenever he wholly deſpaired of perſuading the majority of the Houſe on points where the Conſtitution was at ſtake, he thought attending ſuch meetings as thoſe alluded to uſeful, becauſe it tended to enable him to arrive at the opinion of the public. Let this be ſtated to the Houſe; and if this had no effect upon it, his attendance there would be uſeleſs, and even burthenſome.

It was rather a curious matter of obſervation, that the debates on the Bill had afforded the firſt occaſion, ſince the acceſſion of the Houſe of Brunſwick to the Throne, of an open and parliamentary eſpouſal of the cauſe of the Houſe of Stuart. The preceding night it had been ſaid by an Honourable Baronet (Sir Francis Baſſet) that the idea had been borrowed that evening by the Solicitor General, that though there had been a Revolution in the reigns of George the Firſt and Second, it would not have been accompanied with the ſame dangers which would flow from a ſimilar event taking place at the preſent criſis; as in the former caſe, the deſcendants of the Houſe of Stuart might have been reinſtated on the Throne; whereas, at the preſent moment, anarchy, and a general diſſolution of all the principles of civilized ſociety, would follow any diſpute about the Conſtitutional Rights of the Sovereign. This was Jacobitiſm in perfection, and he was not at all ſurpriſed at hearing Jacobites come forward with ſuch reaſonings. What would the

Houfe of Stuart have done, had they been eftabliſhed on the Throne? They would have introduced the Catholic religion inftead of the Proteftant. They would, perhaps, have put an end to Parliament, refumed the rights of Juries, and fubverted the liberty of the Prefs. They would not, it was faid, have invaded the rights of property, nor invented the deteftable name of French Equality, the inroads of which our Britiſh heroes fwear by their lives and fortunes to refift. If, in the choice of dangers, a man muft forfeit his life and property, in order to avoid a greater evil, (for the bleffings of the Conftitution were out of the queftion, under the government of the Stuarts, which at prefent was fuppofed to be the alternative,) whatever might be the theoretical deftruction, there was very little practical difference between the alternatives.

Mr. Fox proceeded to notice what had been faid with regard to oppreffion. That it would and ought to produce refiftance, had been admitted; and yet Gentlemen would not allow any thing to be copied from France. He ſhould be glad to know wherein confifted the right of refiftance, and that of the memorable expreffion of La Fayette, that in certain cafes, infurrection became a holy right. The Right Hon. Gentleman had faid, refiftance could never make any part of a legiflative confideration. Who had faid that it could? To what part of the country that doctrine was applied, he was perfectly at a lofs to know. Before he quitted this part of the fubject he muft make fome obfervations on what the Right Honourable Gentleman had faid on the Bill of Rights, and the great reverence which had been expreffed for the Whigs of that day. He had faid that the Bill of Rights had been altered by Parliament. He faid the fame thing. He believed that a law which the Legiflature could never touch, muft be a bad one; circumftances muft govern the Legiflature as they govern every thing: but the Bill of Rights was a grave and folemn Act, and not to be touched but upon grave and folemn occafions, and that upon the moft mature deliberation. The Right Hon. Gentleman had faid, that the political fyftem of that age was, that Parliament was the only fecurity to the people for their prefervation, and that out of Parliament were no rights maintained. The fact was otherwife. He had the fanction of the moft celebrated man in the reign of King William, when this principle was fully difcuffed, in favour of his affertion. The Marquis of Hartington moved a refolution, "That it is the right of the fubject to petition the King for the redrefs of grievances, or for calling Parliament, or for diffolving it." This plainly proved, that the rights of the people were, at that time,

defended

defended out of Parliament as well as in it. The attachment of the Marquis of Hartington to the principles of our Conſtitution could not be doubted; this was, therefore, a proper reference; indeed, the whole of the houſe of Cavendiſh had uniformly proved an attachment to the principles of freedom. He was ſorry, that not a branch of that illuſtrious family attended to oppoſe the Bill; he was glad, however, that not one of them ſupported it.

Another part of this ſubject to which he muſt advert, was a very important one. By the Bill, as it ſtood, an exception was made in favour of corporations and corporate bodies, and this was urged as an argument in favour of the Bill; he conceived the diſtinction to be a bad one. Who did not know that property would have weight every where? That property ſhould have excluſive right any where, upon thought or upon ſpeech, was the very eſſence of injuſtice. It was an idea that tended to the diſſolution of all ſociety. In another place, report declared that a perſon of high authority, conſiderable talents and great learning (the Biſhop of Rocheſter) had ſaid, that the maſs of the people had nothing to do with laws, but to obey them. This was not very conſiſtent with the religion which that great character profeſſed. He truſted that the people of England would not tamely ſurrender their indiſputable and hereditary right, whatever inclination an arbitrary Miniſter, or a ſupercilious Prelate, might betray, to wreſt their poſſeſſion out of their hands. What a groſs and abſurd ſpecies of reaſoning was it to contend that, becauſe a man has not the good fortune to have a freehold qualification of forty ſhillings valued rent, he muſt not be allowed to ſpeak his ſentiments on ſubjects which involved his deareſt and moſt important concerns equally with thoſe of the moſt affluent.

He did not intend to argue the queſtion of Parliamentary Reform, or what ſort of a reform there ought to be in that Houſe; on that occaſion, the idea that the Houſe of Commons was a virtual repreſentation of all the people of England, was, however, to be done away by the diſtinction in favour of boroughs; the reſult of that diſtinction, if it was obtained, would be, that thoſe who had property in boroughs were to be free, and thoſe who had not were not to be permitted to meet for the purpoſe of petitioning. This diſtinction tended to make the ariſtocracy of that Houſe ſtill ſtronger, and to do away the idea of there being any connection between the Houſe and the maſs of the people. It tended to increaſe the monopoly in boroughs; and to tell the people, that the democratic part of the Conſtitution was not worth preſerving. The natural conſequence

ſequence muſt be, that the intereſt of boroughs would increaſe, and thoſe of the reſt of the public would diminiſh. The Bill, therefore, went to inſtitute a fatal diſtinction between the conſtituents and non-conſtituents in the kingdom; a diſtinction ſufficient to deſtroy the harmony and peace of the country; to confute the only argument which could be adduced in oppoſition to Parliamentary Reform, and to convert the Government of the country into an Ariſtocracy, or an Oligarchy.

Another clauſe was almoſt too ridiculous to mention, namely, that which prohibited all public lectures delivered for money. What would become of the profeſſors of the different ſciences in the univerſities! Would they not be clearly involved in the operation of that clauſe? Even in its moſt qualified conſtruction, he could not conceive by what principle of policy a man was to be prohibited from acquiring his ſubſiſtence by inſtructing the people in the principles of the Conſtitution? He profeſſed he knew nothing of Mr. Thelwall and his lectures; if, however, they were innocent, why ſhould he be diſturbed? If they were ſeditious or treaſonable, why was he not proſecuted under the exiſting ſtatutes? The ſame obſervations applied to the papers which had been read by the noble Lord (Mornington); if they were treaſonable, the authors of them were amenable to the treaſon laws. He would not be underſtood as, in the ſmalleſt degree, giving an opinion whether they were or not, nor even whether every ſeditious paper which was circulated ought to be ſubmitted to the courſe of law. He rather thought that a judicious ſelection of the moſt glaring and dangerous ought to be made by the Attorney General.

The general principle of the Bill was, he ſaid, a blow at the outworks of the Conſtitution, neither more nor leſs than a daring attempt to ſubvert its very foundation, the freedom of diſcuſſion. Upon the liberty of the preſs the baſis of the Conſtitution was known to reſt. Take theſe away, and the whole fabric muſt fall. No man would deny that there were many abuſes and defects in the practice of the Conſtitution. Its chief value conſiſted in the excellence of the foundation; and, when that was deſtroyed, the reſt would not be worth preſerving. A remedy might have been found for almoſt any other ſhock which it could have received. Had Parliament thought proper to alter the ſucceſſion to the Crown from the preſent family on the Throne, dreadful convulſions would no doubt have enſued; but the inveſtiture of a new Prince with the ſovereign power might have quieted the commotion. Had Parliament made a bold and open attack upon the trial

by

by jury, a ſpeedy remedy would have been found in the deluge of argument and declamation which would immediately have iſſued from the preſs. Petitions would have been poured in, remonſtrating againſt the aſſault on public liberty; and the voice of the people, raiſed with unanimity, and maintained with firmneſs, would have awed the proudeſt Miniſter into ſubmiſſion. When, however, the power of ſpeaking was taken away, what was there left but the patience of implicit ſubmiſſion? What hopes could be entertained that grievances would be removed, when thoſe who felt them dared not complain? In ſuch a caſe it would coſt him little anxiety that a ſpirit of reſiſtance was found impoſſible to be ſuppreſſed. He believed a ſpirit of diſcontent to be pretty general in the country at preſent; and he had no heſitation in ſaying that it originated in a bad Government, in wicked and ruinous meaſures, and in the blind and unmeaning confidence which the people had too long repoſed in an unfortunate and deſperate Adminiſtration. The diſcontent might, perhaps, exiſt in ſome degree previous to the war; but he affirmed, that it had ſpread in conſequence of it into a much more general and alarming extent. If the diſcontent originated in French principles, it was indebted for its currency to the meaſures of Britiſh Miniſters. He wiſhed to bring them to iſſue upon this point. They ſaid the people of England are loyal; ſo ſaid he. They aſſerted that there were malcontents in the country; in that he alſo agreed. He would nevertheleſs aſk, whether the danger o be apprehended from French principles was greater at preſent than two years ago? Let them ſay either the one or the other; he entreated them, for God's ſake, not to ſay both. For his own part, he thought it was greater than at preſent. If it was, he demanded if the increaſe of danger was not owing to the calamitous war, which was unjuſtly commenced, and had been unfortunately proſecuted? If the danger was diminiſhed, why would they apply a more hazardous remedy, than when the diſeaſe was deſcribed as raging with its utmoſt fury? Whatever was the degree of danger in which the country ſtood, he was firmly of opinion that it would be increaſed, rather than leſſened, by the remedy propoſed. The danger had principally ariſen from a ſyſtem of terror which Miniſters had adopted; and the moſt effectual mode of prolonging the danger was by continuing this ſyſtem, of which the preſent Bill ſeemed to form a moſt prominent part.

With regard to the danger of Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments, they had been repreſented as the cauſe of the ſubverſion of the old French Government, and they were deſcribed as the

inſtruments employed by the Correſponding Society to demoliſh the Britiſh Conſtitution. He profeſſed himſelf no friend to either the one or the other; he quoted the high authority of the Duke of Richmond, by whom they had been ſupported, and thence inferred, that the opinions of thoſe in the higher and lower ſtations of ſociety were treated in a very different ſtyle of reſpect. When the Members of Correſponding Societies at this time think, as the Duke of Richmond thought ſome years ago, a general outcry is raiſed, and it is exclaimed, "Will you preſume to touch the ſacred ark of the Conſtitution with unhallowed hands?" Nothing, however, is ſaid, when a Miniſter comes forward, not, indeed, with unhallowed hands, (a Miniſter's hands are like thoſe of the High-Prieſt of old, which it would be ſacrilege even to look at) not to touch it only, but to tear it to pieces.

The ſole reaſon aſſigned for this outrage againſt the Conſtitution was, that when new occaſions offer, new changes muſt take place. Nothing new was neceſſary on the decay of Old Sarum, and the annihilation, but the name of the rotten borough of England; the late meeting of the Correſponding Society had, however, uſhered in a new æra in the hiſtory of the world. He urged upon the ſerious conſideration of Miniſters, the ſituation into which they had reduced the country, and implored them to abandon a ſyſtem pregnant with ruin; and to employ every lenient and conciliatory means to gain the affections of the people, and attach them to the Conſtitution. He ſaid he knew there was a ſpirit in the country to ward off the ravages of anarchy; he hoped alſo there was a ſpirit to reſiſt the ſtrides of oppreſſion. Mr. Fox concluded by ſaying, that he would not contend that the war alone was the cauſe of the ſcarcity of proviſions; but that it was an integral part, one of the principal cauſes of the ſcarcity, could not be diſputed. As long as it continued, the ſame effect would be continually increaſing, and muſt alſo be felt for a conſiderable time after peace ſhould be concluded; for this was not one of the caſes in which there were reaſonable grounds for expecting that, "*ſublata cauſa tollitur effectus.*"

The Solicitor General offered a few remarks in the way of explanation.

Sir Francis Basset defended himſelf from an inſinuation which he conceived to have been made againſt him by Mr. Fox, of having uſed language which might be conſtrued into an avowal of Jacobitical principles. He would not retort upon the Right Honourable Gentlemen by a charge of his being a favourer of principles

ciples that were jacobinical, though his ſpeech of that night favoured of them a little more ſtrongly that was uſually heard in that Houſe. He thought it neceſſary to ſay thus much, as it was of infinitely more importance to plain men like him not to be miſrepreſented, than it was to perſons of Mr. Fox's powers, who were always capable of explaining any thing in which they conſidered themſelves to be miſrepreſented or miſunderſtood.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER ſaid, that as he had repeatedly delivered his ſentiments upon the Bill, he felt but little inclined unneceſſarily to take up the attention of the Houſe, particularly as moſt part of what had been already ſaid that day had little connection with the queſtion. Under this deſcription he did not include the compariſon which Mr. Fox had thought proper to draw between a Revolution in this country in favour of the Houſe of Stuart, and a Revolution in favour of that kind of Government which French principles would recommend and inculcate. No man could be more ſenſible than he was of the dreadful calamities that the nation would ſuſtain by the re-eſtabliſhment of a Popiſh Pretender, who would, no doubt, endeavour to ſubvert our liberties, our religion, and our laws, and poſſibly he might ſucceed in his object. He had no heſitation, however, in declaring, that were he to chooſe between two ſuch horrible alternatives, he would chearfully prefer the reſtoration of the Pretender to that cruel and deſolating ſyſtem of anarchy, which would radically deſtroy all thoſe principles by which ſocial order was maintained. He ſcrupled not to agree with the Right Honourable Gentleman in declaring, that were we under the ſame circumſtances that preſſed on our anceſtors, we ſhould be equally ready to make the ſame ſacrifices that they had done in ſo neceſſary a reſiſtance; and he further admitted, that when we expreſſed ourſelves equally willing to riſk our lives in an oppoſition to either jacobitical or jacobinical principles, we had no more to offer, nor were we any longer to ſeek for any practical difference. It happened conveniently for his purpoſe, that the arguments and illuſtrations employed by the Right Honourable Gentleman, furniſhed him with materials which would ſerve for an anſwer to moſt of his arguments, as far as he had urged any thing cloſely connected with the ſubject. Of this compariſon between the two kinds of Revolutions alluded to in particular, without attempting to reaſon on which ſide the choice ought to preponderate, it was ſufficient to ſay, that we were ready with our lives to reſiſt the introduction of either.

Here then the Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he wiſhed to pauſe, and beſeech the Right Honourable Gentleman to adopt the ſage counſels of his anceſtors, with the ſame ardour which he expreſſed when he declared his deſire to imitate the valour of their arms. Our anceſtors expelled the family of the Stuarts, and eſtabliſhed the glorious and immortal Revolution; in the firſt inſtance by the ſword; but their bravery might have been ineffectual, if they had not ſecured their object by legiſlative proviſions. It was in this manner, more than by perſonal valour, that they preſerved the Conſtitution. What was the Bill of Rights itſelf, but a meaſure adopted by our anceſtors, in conſequence of their finding themſelves under new circumſtances? They declared it to be High Treaſon to diſpute the Queen's authority, to deny that the Parliament was competent to confine and limit the ſucceſſion, and, finally, to render attempts to introduce a ſyſtem, different from that which they had eſtabliſhed by the laws, feloniouſly penal. Upon examining the preſent Bill, it would be found, that their example was rigidly adhered to, and preventive meaſures reſorted to on motives of policy and prudence, in order to guard againſt that extreme which would make it neceſſary for many to riſk their lives in a conteſt, and be involved in all the miſeries that attend a civil war. One great recommendation of this temporary meaſure was, that it ſtrictly adhered to the examples of former times; and while it added to the general ſecurity, made no innovation on the Conſtitution, or, in the ſmalleſt degree, weakened the ſpirit of the laws. Our anceſtors, in times of danger, and even during that interval which took place between the depoſition and reſtoration of the Monarchy, adhered, as much as ſo peculiar a ſituation would admit, to ancient forms, and conducted the public buſineſs by means of both Houſes of Parliament, if that aſſembly could properly be called a Parliament, when it was actually deprived of one of its component parts.

Were there no precedents, no land-marks, to guide their proceedings on the preſent emergency? In days of difficulty and danger, which had threatened one branch of the Legiſlature, and when doubts had ariſen reſpecting the competency of Parliament to legiſlate in one particular caſe, limiting the ſucceſſion of the Crown, our anceſtors made a law ſuitable to the occaſion. But at this time what was the enemy that we had to contend with, and what the matter to be repelled? Not an attack upon one branch of the Legiſlature, not a doubt about the right to legiſlate in a particular caſe; the right to legiſlate at all was queſtioned, and the legality of

of Monarchy itſelf in any ſhape was denied. Was that, he begged to aſk, a proper time to ſit ſtill, and refrain from taking vigorous and effectual meaſures, merely becauſe they might deviate in ſome degree from eſtabliſhed practice? The parallel that had been attempted to be drawn between the meaſures of the Executive Government at this time, and thoſe of the Houſe of Stuart, in no degree applied. In the days of the Charles's, the people were above all taught to look up to Parliament for ſafety and protection: they might undoubtedly look elſewhere for aſſiſtance, but Parliament was the centre in which all their hopes and dependence reſted, and in which alone they were led to expect redreſs for their grievances: ſuch had been the example of their anceſtors at the Revolution, and as it was before their eyes, it ought to regulate their proceedings. The Honourable Gentleman, he obſerved, had talked of riſking his life in defence of the Conſtitution; that was not required; the Honourable Gentleman was only called upon to apply ſuch ſalutary laws to the preſent ſtate of the country as the circumſtances demand, and the riſking of lives, for the preſent at leaſt, would be unneceſſary: but precaution muſt be taken in time. The Revolution itſelf might be inſtanced as a ſtrong proof of the propriety of the meaſure. At the Revolution the Crown became vacant; our anceſtors in their wiſdom retained the forms of the Conſtitution, and conſidered it to be ſtill ſubſiſting. The two Houſes of Parliament, and not the body of the people, were reſorted to as the means by which the Legiſlature, in its collective and entire form, was to be reſtored; this proved that with Parliament alone, the right of making alterations in the laws had always reſted.

The next point to be conſidered had been inſiſted upon much in the Houſe, and, as he underſtood, made very induſtrious uſe of out of it, viz. that the preſent Bill was calculated to create a difference, and cauſe a ſeparation between the lower and the higher orders of the people. The effect of this Bill, he was ready to maintain, would be diametrically the reverſe. The ſyſtem of dividing the orders of the community was that which formed the grand ſpring and power of Jacobiniſm, which the preſent Bill was evidently calculated to oppoſe, to check, and to ſuppreſs. It was by exciting the envy and hatred of the poor againſt thoſe in higher ſtations, by holding out to them the hope of exchanging their conditions, and by repreſenting property as the eaſy prey of the indigent, the idle, and the licentious, that the profligate principles of Jacobiniſm had ſucceeded in deſtroying all ſocial order in France, and the ſame end had

had been aimed at by the ſame means, in all other parts of Europe.

Under our happy Conſtitution, he believed there was no man of rank or property, at this time, ſo negligent of his duty, and ſo unacquainted with his intereſt, as to draw a line of ſeparation between himſelf and thoſe that were below him, in rank, affluence, or degree. What nation in the world did exiſt or had been known to exiſt, in which, the great and the low were placed at ſo little a diſtance, and ſo ſlightly ſeparated? A continued and well cemented connection, which could not eaſily be diſſolved, was ſo viſible, that it was impoſſible to fix upon any link in the general chain where the union of the parts did not immediately appear. The middle claſs derived ſupply, vigour, and ſupport, from that below it; diffuſed it through all around; communicated and received reciprocal aid from that which was above it; and an animating ſpring gave that activity and general circulation of benefits to the whole, which compoſed the order of well regulated ſociety.

The manner by which the Right Hon. Gentleman had attempted to prove that the tendency of this Bill was to make ſuch invidious diſtinctions was moſt extraordinary. The Bill had been held out, as a Bill which proſcribed all meetings whatſoever from petitioning Parliament, except ſuch as were licenced. So far from this, the Bill left all eſtabliſhed meetings preciſely as they were before. The requiring a licence had been ſtated in all caſes as an intolerable evil, it was nevertheleſs, ſingular enough, that *not* to require a licence was conſidered as a ſtill worſe evil, on account of the partiality of the principle. Let him aſk, what was the partiality? Was it that all other meetings but thoſe that were licenced were to be aboliſhed? No ſuch thing; they were merely to be put under ſome new reſtrictions, which ſhould make them more reſemble the regular meetings, which were not to be ſubjected to a licence.

To come to the main queſtion. It was diſtinctly this. Firſt, does the Bill ſo abridge and limit the right of petitioning Parliament as to leave it inſufficient for the purpoſe of affording due conſtitutional ſecurity? Secondly, does the Bill impoſe any ineffectual, ſuperfluous, and unneceſſary reſtraints? In order to judge upon theſe queſtions, he would conſider what were the limitations impoſed by the Bill on this right of petitioning. A previous notice of the intended meetings was, in certain caſes, to be required. The meetings of corporate bodies were not required to give any notice whatever; meetings called by a certain number of juſtices,

meetings called by the Lords Lieutenant of counties, or by Sheriffs, were all excepted from the obligation; how unfair then was it to call the Bill, as it had been called, 'an extinction of the right to petition,' when, in fact, that channel through which petitions usually come, was still left open; and he was as ready as any man to admit broadly, that *supposed or real grievances might, as matter of right, be presented to Parliament by all ranks of people.* He must, however, at the same time remark, that he did not consider those to be the best friends of the Constitution, or the lower ranks of people, who were always goading them to bring forward petitions, and encouraging the agitation and discussion of public affairs; among those too who, of all men, from their education, their habits of life, and their means of information, were indisputably the least capable of exercising sound judgment on such topics. The right of petitioning then remained as formerly, excepting in certain cases, to which he had alluded.

With regard to the observations made by the Rt. Hon. Gent. on his interference for procuring a more equal representation of the people in Parliament, he said, he would do him the justice to say, that he never had encouraged the wild, visionary, and mischievous plan of Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments. He had felt, what every man of sense and observation must feel, that the House of Commons, composed as it was, was the virtual representation of the people of England; the sole matter in doubt was, whether the members had such an identity of interest with those who had no voice in election of representatives, as would secure to the latter the consideration, to which, as Englishmen, they ought to be entitled. In the meetings held upon that subject formerly, though some of them had not been regularly convened by the sheriffs, he well remembered that their proceedings were looked to with more jealousy than the proceedings of those meetings which were assembled in a regular manner.

So little had been urged in opposition to the provisions of the Bill, that it was unnecessary for him to argue much in their defence. The notice to be given of meetings held avowedly for the discussion of public measures, had been so modified as to retain little of that formidable appearance in which Gentlemen at first represented it to bear; indeed, the Honourable Gentleman himself had confessed, it was that part of the Bill to which he saw the least objection. So necessary did public advertisements, in order to convene large bodies of men on political questions, strike him to be, that the clause would seem a superfluous precaution, if it

were

were not for the peculiar conſtruction of the Correſponding Societies, which, by their diviſions and ſubdiviſions, had not only the means of ſecret communication, but alſo of prompt execution of their deſigns, however alarming, however dangerous.

It had been much inſiſted on that a main objection to the Bill was, that theſe meetings were hereafter to be held under the inſpection of magiſtrates. The force of this objection would ſurely be done away, when it was conſidered that this proviſion only ſet all other meetings on the ſame footing with thoſe which had always been authoriſed in their corporate capacities; for in regular meetings the Sheriff was neceſſarily and of courſe always preſent. The next point complained of, had been the mode of diſperſing of meetings. Was it poſſible for the Houſe not to have felt the danger of ſome late meetings, and did they not feel the neceſſity of checking them? If they did not, he would only ſay, that this was not the time to trifle, if they did not ſeize the opportunity of applying a preventive, they might ſoon loſe the power of exerciſing their own functions in that Houſe. For this reaſon it was highly neceſſary to grant new diſcretionary power to magiſtrates, a degree of additional power, guarded by the degree of additional reſponſibility attached to them. He owned he felt ſome aſtoniſhment at one argument coming from a quarter from which he leaſt expected it, a declaration that ſtruck at the very foundation of the adminiſtration of public juſtice in this country. A learned Gentleman, of the firſt profeſſional character and practice, of the fineſt talents, the moſt brilliant abilities and the higheſt fame, had urged as an argument againſt the Bill, and put it in a general and unqualified manner, that the magiſtracy of the country were neceſſarily corrupt; an invective againſt a body of perſons, to whoſe exertions, in their ſituation, the country owed the moſt ſignal ſervices. With equal ſurpriſe he had heard the ſame learned and Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Erſkine) who, while he arraigned the diſcretion granted to the magiſtrates under this Bill, acknowledged at the ſame time, that they were already authoriſed to exerciſe the ſame powers under the exiſting laws, namely, the Riot Act, and a ſtatute of Henry IV. which had been alluded to by the Judge (the late Lord Mansfield) on the trial of Lord George Gordon. Without inſiſting for the preſent, on the illiberality of the ſuggeſtion, its inconſiſtency was glaring, and it might be proper to conſider, in another point of view, how a meeting convened by a Sheriff could be eſteemed a meeting held only by permiſſion of his Majeſty's Miniſters. That Sheriffs were appointed by his Majeſty, from liſts made out by the Judges of Aſſize, of the perſons

persons most capable of serving that office, was certainly true. Although the office of Sheriff was an office of dignity and honour, were he to ask, whether his Majesty in conferring it, bestowed a favour which called for any great gratitude on the part of the receiver, he believed that in most instances he should be answered in the negative. Added to this, when the appointment was once conferred, the King had no power to remove the person appointed Sheriff; and upon the whole, there was scarcely any office which was attended with a greater degree of independence. Other magistrates, who exercised offices for which, as all our law writers declared, the nation was indebted to them, and who, in the service of their country, every day exposed themselves to insults and dangers, he could not but lament that any professional Gentleman should be found to speak of them with such undeserved indignity. It well merited the close examination of Gentlemen, he said, to what extent, and to what extent only, the powers of magistrates under the present Bill went to prevent meetings, if their designs seemed calculated to obtain redress through any other medium than the Legislature, and to disperse them, if the magistrates were of opinion, that the proceedings held, or the speeches delivered at any meeting had an illegal tendency. In fine, the sole object of the Bill was, that the people should look to Parliament, and to Parliament alone, for the redress of such grievances as they might have to complain of, with a confident reliance of relief being afforded them, if their complaints should be well founded and practically remediable. That it should be understood that the condition of no man was so abject, but he could find a legal means of bringing his grievances before his Representatives in Parliament, and subject them to their consideration; but that he would not leave a door open, through which a torrent might rush in, and overwhelm the Constitution. It behoved them to take care that menaces were not conveyed to Parliament under the pretext of Petitions, and that they were not made the vehicles of indirect libels, fabricated at meetings convened under the pretence of very different objects, by men whose real purpose it was to undermine and subvert the Constitution.

After a concise but pointed series of answers to the several objections that had been urged against the Bill, the Chancellor of the Exchequer concluded by saying, that, upon the whole, a just comparison ought to be made between the evils that might follow from this Bill, and the dangers that might arise were the House to reject it. The balance being struck on this alternative, the next question

was

was, whether it was not neceſſary that the people ſhould know it was to Parliament alone that they muſt look for any alteration of the law, and that, when their grievances were known and ſtated, they would not look to Parliament in vain for redreſs? The Houſe and the public were equally intereſted in this Bill, and ſo was every claſs of the people, as fair and conſtitutional petitioners; it therefore only remained for Gentlemen to decide whether they did their duty beſt for the intereſt of their conſtituents or not, by entertaining or rejecting a Bill founded on ſuch principles.

Mr. Erskine explained. He declared he only ſaid, that, by the preſent laws, the magiſtrates would have the power to diſperſe meetings held for ſeditious purpoſes, or likely to tend to ſedition; and he muſt perſiſt to contend it never was in the contemplation of the law to prevent the meeting of the people, to conſult on their grievances, to repreſent them decently, and preſent petitions to any branch of the Legiſlature.

Lord Hood roſe merely to offer a few obſervations on the late meeting at Palace-yard. The number of which that meeting was ſaid to conſiſt ſeemed to him to have been exceedingly exaggerated. Gentlemen had talked of 30,000 perſons being preſent; he had been aſſured that the number did not exceed 5000. Whatever might have been the number, his Lordſhip profeſſed himſelf ready to confeſs, that the meeting had obſerved the greateſt order and decorum, and that the few words he was deſirous of addreſſing to them were received with ſilence and attention.

He attended the meeting in Palace-yard, and had requeſted many of his friends to attend it, becauſe it was his intention to object to its proceedings, as he could not conſider it competent to expreſs the ſentiments of the houſeholders of Weſtminſter. The unanimity of opinion againſt the meaſures before the Houſe was not ſo perfect, as from appearances ſome Gentlemen were led to ſuppoſe or choſe to repreſent; a great number certainly held up both their hands in approbation of the reſolution propoſed to them, ſtill he knew there were many preſent who held up *no hand* at all, but remained ſilent ſpectators of what paſſed.

Mr. Fox expreſſed his ſatisfaction on hearing the noble Lord bear teſtimony to the peaceable and orderly behaviour of the meeting, and have the honeſt candour to confeſs, that the obſervations and objections he had to offer were received with becoming attention and reſpect; eſpecially as this confeſſion of the noble Lord completely refuted the accounts given of the meeting by certain perſons and public prints, who aſſerted that one ſide only was heard, and that no reſpect or attention was paid to the other. With regard

gard to the precife number of perfons prefent, Mr. Fox faid he could not take upon himfelf to afcertain: all he could fay was, that the meeting was far more numerous than any other he had ever feen collected together on a fimilar occafion, either at Covent-Garden or elfewhere. Much lefs would he pretend to fay, that all thofe who attended at the meeting were houfeholders of Weftminfter, for fuch was not the intention of thofe who advifed or called the meeting; their wifh was, that it fhould be compofed of the inhabitants of Weftminfter at large, all of whom were equally affected by the prefent meafures, againft the paffing of which they had affembled to remonftrate.

Mr. Mainwaring faid, he felt and had long feen the neceffity of fpeedily adopting fome ftrong and effectual meafure in order to ftem the torrent of fedition and political poifon that fo widely fpread, and threatened to overwhelm and infect the whole country. He declared, he could not approve the meafure propofed in all its parts. It appeared to him objectionable in two points: one that which entrufted magiftrates with a difcretionary power, for the exercife of which he thought no man adequately qualified; the other, that which prohibited all public lecturing on any given fubject, without a licence, whereby he conceived the diffufion of ufeful knowledge would be checked, and impediments raifed againft the cultivation and improvement of the arts and fciences. He thought it right to ftate thefe objections, but faid he would, neverthelefs, vote for the fecond reading of the Bill, without pledging himfelf to give it any further fupport, unlefs the provifions which appeared to him obnoxious were meliorated or withdrawn.

Sir John Rous, in allufion to an obfervation made by Mr. Sheridan, faid, that he, for one, would not fear or hefitate to face his conftituents, though he commended and would vote for the meafure then under difcuffion, with the neceffity of which both he and they were deeply impreffed. In proof of this, he read to the Houfe the refult of a meeting held by the Freeholders of the county of Suffolk, in which they inftructed their reprefentatives to fupport every meafure that could tend to the fafety and fecurity of his Majefty's Perfon and Government, and to check thofe feditious affemblies which had fo juftly alarmed the nation.

Mr. Sheridan faid a few words in explanation, after which the queftion being loudly and repeatedly called for, the Houfe divided.

Ayes (for the fecond reading)	213
Noes — —	43
Majority — —	170

X

POPULAR MEETINGS.

COMMON HALL.

THE following requiſition having been delivered to the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, he has, in conſequence thereof, appointed a General Meeting of the Livery of London, to be held in Guildhall To-morrow (Friday), at twelve o'clock, when it is hoped that every Liveryman of London, a friend to the Conſtitution of the Country, will give his attendance and voice for the queſtion then to be propoſed.

" We, whoſe names are ſubſcribed, requeſt that your Lordſhip will convene the Livery of London in Common Hall, ' To conſider the expediency of inſtructing their Repreſentatives in Parliament to vote againſt two Bills now pending in Parliament, for the declared purpoſe of preventing a public diſcuſſion of public meaſures, and tending thereby to deprive Britiſh ſubjects of their unqueſtionable rights.'

" And in order that the genuine ſenſe of the Livery of London may be taken upon this important queſtion, we intreat your Lordſhip to take all poſſible means in your power to prevent any perſon being admitted into Guildhall on that day, unleſs he is upon the Livery of ſome Company."

Signed by near One Hundred Liverymen.

Society of United Publicans, eſtabliſhed for the purpoſe of aſſiſting the Civil Power in proſecuting to conviction all perſons who commit Burglaries and Thefts in Public Houſes; and alſo for the Redreſs of every Grievance which Publicans in general are ſubject to and labour under.

IT appearing to the Committee of this Society, that the Bill now pending in Parliament for preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies, will, if paſſed into a law, tend in a great degree to prevent the meeting of friendly Clubs and Societies in Public Houſes,

A General Meeting of the Members of this Society will be held at the Shakeſpear Tavern, Covent-Garden, on Saturday next, at eleven o'clock in the forenoon preciſely, for the purpoſe of taking ſuch Bill into conſideration, and to adopt ſome reſolutions thereon, as may appear juſt and reaſonable.

At which Meeting, as many Members of the Society, as well as Licenſed Publicans in general, as can make it convenient, are earneſtly requeſted to attend.

PARISH OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS, *Nov.* 18, 1795.

THE Pariſhioners are requeſted to meet at the Globe Tavern, in Craven-ſtreet, on Friday next, at twelve o'clock preciſely, to conſider of proper meaſures to be adopted upon the Bills now pending in Parliament againſt Treaſoable and Seditious Practices.

JOHN DRUMMOND.

At

November 19, 1795.

At a very numerous and refpectable Ward Meeting of the Inhabitants of Farringdon Without (convened by fummons from Mr. Alderman Wilkes), at St. Dunftan's Church, confifting of more than 1000 perfons, to take into confideration two Bills now before Parliament, "for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government;" and "for preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies:"

I. Refolved unanimoufly, That this Meeting declare their firm attachment to the principles of the Conftitution, as eftablifhed at the Revolution.

II. Refolved unanimoufly, That the late daring outrage committed on his Majefty's facred perfon is viewed by this Meeting with the utmoft abhorrence; and we are ready to affift in bringing the offenders to juftice; being fully fatisfied the exifting laws are fufficient for that purpofe.

III. Refolved (with only four diffentient hands), That the Bills now pending in Parliament are deftructive of the principles of the Conftitution; a violation of the Bill of Rights; and a fubverfion of the Liberties of the People; and have a manifeft tendency to alienate the affections of his Majefty's fubjects.

IV. Refolved (with only three diffentient hands), That a Petition to the Honourable Houfe of Commons, expreffive of the above Refolutions, be figned by the Inhabitants of this Ward, and prefented forthwith.

V. Refolved unanimoufly, That a Committee, confifting of the following feven Gentlemen, do prepare the fame:

Mr. Deputy Nichols,
Mr. John Lambe,
Mr. William Wright,
William Waddington, Efq.
Mr. Robert Waithman,
Mr. Luke Hodgfon, and
Mr. William Evans;

and that they immediately withdraw, and prepare the fame: which being done,

VI. Refolved unanimoufly, That the Petition now read be the Petition to be prefented to the Houfe of Commons; and that the Chairman and the Committee do requeft Meffrs. Fox, Sheridan, and Martin to prefent the fame.

VII. Refolved unanimoufly, That this Ward, containing one-fixth part of the Inhabitants of London, are decidedly of opinion, that the Court of Common Council have acted in direct oppofition, and, by yefterday's decifion, in open contempt, of the opinion of the Inhabitants of London; and that we do form a Committee for the purpofe of fupporting Gentlemen of independent principles at the next election for Common-Councilmen of this Ward, and recommend other Wards to do the fame.

VIII. Refolved unanimoufly, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Meffrs. Ellis and Copley, the Churchwardens, for granting the ufe of the church for this Meeting.

IX. Refolved unanimoufly, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Alderman Wilkes, for his readinefs in calling the fame.

X. Refolved unanimoufly, That the thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Deputy Brewer, for his impartial conduct in the chair.

 XI. Refolved

XI. Refolved, That the Refolutions of this Meeting be figned by the Chairman, and publifhed in the London Newfpapers.

RICHARD BREWER.

N. B. The Petition will lie for fignatures at the Inqueft Rooms of St. Dunftan's and St. Andrew's churches, and at the Veftry Room, St. Bride's, from eleven till three o'clock on Friday and Saturday, and from eleven until two o'clock on Monday next.

MEETING OF THE ABOVE WARD.

YESTERDAY morning, agreeable to a requifition to Mr. Alderman Wilkes, a numerous and refpectable Meeting was held at St. Dunftan's Church, Fleet-ftreet. An apology was made for the abfence of Mr. Alderman Wilkes; and Mr. Sparrow moved, that Mr. Deputy Brewer be requefted to take the Chair of the Meeting, which was carried unanimoufly.

Mr. WAITHMAN rofe and avowed himfelf one who had figned the requifition to call the Meeting. He faid, the Bills now pending in Parliament were an abfolute violation of the Conftitution, by doing away the right of meeting without the permiffion of a Magiftrate, and they were likewife a violation of the Bill of Rights: to prove which, he read feveral extracts from the Bill; and which Bill, he afferted, was only a repetition of thofe rights which were natural, and had been enjoyed by Britons before the Bill was in exiftence; the language of the Bill of Rights being, "We do demand, claim, &c." and hiftory abounded with a maintenance of thofe rights. Formerly we had Parliaments who were zealous in fupporting and maintaining thofe rights; but lately we had Parliaments, who were willing, on the afertions of a corrupt Minifter, to do them away. Arbitrary acts, like thofe now pending in Parliament drove Charles the Second from the throne of this country, and fuch meafures like thofe were more likely to lead to a revolution than any others whatever. He faid, this meeting had been called for another purpofe befides petitioning the Houfe of Commons againft the Bills, namely, to inftruct their Reprefentatives in Common Council, but who in general acted without the confent of their conftituents, and which they had done no longer ago than yefterday, when they came to a refolution to fupport the prefent tyrannical Bills.

Mr. WADDINGTON, of Chatham Place, fpoke at confiderable length againft the Bills.

Mr. LAMB, one of the Common Council for the Ward, reprobated the two Bills pending in Parliament in very ftrong terms.

Mr. Deputy NICHOLS juftified his public conduct, and faid, he fhould be always ready to receive inftructions from his conftituents, when agreeable to his own feelings; the laft expreffion received a general mark of difapprobation; he profeffed himfelf averfe to the Bills, and would fign petitions againft them.

Several refolutions were then moved by Dr. HODSON, expreffing their abhorrence of the late infult offered to his Majefty, and hoping that the perpetrators would be brought to condign punifhment, and that the laws in exiftence were fufficient for that purpofe.

Mr. BRASBRIDGE rofe and faid, he could not agree with the latter part of the motion, and made a feeble attempt to defend the Bills.

Mr.

Mr. WAITHMAN obſerved, that it was by a perſeverance in public meetings that the ſhop-tax had been repealed, and he ſhould not wonder by the Miniſter's attempt to prohibit public meetings, that he intended to lay it on again, as he had relinquiſhed it with great reluctance. Mr. W. denied that property would be ſafe if the Bills paſſed; for it would be impoſſible to oppoſe an oppreſſive tax; and that the Bills were not to protect the Conſtitution, but to protect its corruptions and abuſes; and that the Miniſter had involved us in a deſperate and deſtructive war, to reinſtate and ſupport the corruptions of another Government.

The motion was then put and carried, with only the diſſenting voices of Mr. Braſbridge and three others.

A motion that the Bills were a violation of the Bill of Rights, was carried in a ſimilar way.

A motion was made that the inhabitants of the Ward do approve and ſign the Petition laying at the Paul's Head Tavern. An amendment was moved by Mr. Waddington, that they do adopt a Petition of their own, which, after ſome converſation, was agreed to, and ſeven Gentlemen were appointed a Committee to prepare the ſame, and in about twenty minutes returned with a Petition, which was agreed to, and Mr. Branſcomb propoſed, that one of the City Members ſhould preſent the ſame, which was objected to by Mr. Lamb, who obſerved, if the Meeting agreed to that they would ſully the whole day's proceedings; and it was agreed that the Committee ſhould wait upon Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Martin, requeſting them to deliver the ſame.

Mr. WAITHMAN moved a vote of thanks to Alderman Wilkes, for his readineſs in calling the Meeting; he aſſured the Meeting the Alderman would have attended, but was prevented by being obliged to attend ſome annual buſineſs; the motion being put was carried unanimouſly.

Dr. HODSON moved a vote of cenſure on the Court of Common Council, for acting in direct oppoſition to the intereſts and ſenſe of their conſtituents, and recommending Committees to be formed to oppoſe thoſe in the Common Council who thus act at the enſuing election, which was carried unanimouſly.

The Citizens of CHICHESTER have agreed to Petition to the following ſubſtance:

" WE whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, inhabitants of the City of Chicheſter, and its environs, with that reſpect which is due to the Repreſentatives of the people, and that plainneſs which becomes us, wiſh to lay before you our ſentiments on the Convention Bill, now pending in Parliament—which we look upon as the moſt daring and outrageous attack upon the Conſtitution of this nation, and the rights of the people, that ever was planned and purſued by wicked men. We are convinced that every Briton has an inalienable right, and that it is the duty of every man to watch over the conduct of Adminiſtration, that the Conſtitution be not injured nor the rights of the people invaded. The people of England never delegated to their rulers authority to alter the Conſtitution of the Realm, and change the limited Monarchy thereof into a devouring deſpotiſm; and we hope, and do firmly believe, that they ſtill retain ſo much of their native courage, and

and love of freedom, as not to suffer a daring Ministerial influence to rob them of this right, the corner-stone of all the rest. We make this appeal to you, who ought to be, and we hope on the present momentous occasion will approve yourselves, the guardians of our liberties: at the same time assuring you, that much as we deprecate the awful alternative, yet we would rather die free, than live slaves".

At a Meeting of the Committee of the CAMBERWELL Association, November 17, 1795,

CL. CH. CRESPIGNY, Esq. in the Chair,

Resolved,

THAT the following Resolution of the Association passed on the 7th December 1792, be re-published in the Public Papers, viz.

"On duly considering the many blessings the people of these kingdoms possess, above all others, in the security of their persons and properties, under the wise and mild administration of our laws, and the present excellent form of Government, by King, Lords, and Commons, we do unanimously resolve to use every endeavour, consistent with the duty of our respective stations, to frustrate the designs of open and insidious enemies, who shall attempt to disturb the public tranquillity; to discourage and suppress all seditious Publications and Meetings, tending to undermine our inestimable Constitution, which secures to every person, whether rich or poor, the full and equal enjoyment of his civil and religious liberties; and we will strenuously support the civil magistrates in the maintenance of the just rights and properties of our fellow citizens."

Resolved, That this Committee consider it their duty to express their abhorrence of the late daring outrages on the Person of his Majesty, and their firm attachment and adherence to the excellent Constitution of their country.

CL. CH. CRESPIGNY, Chairman.

At a Meeting of the Booksellers, Printers, Stationers, and others materially connected with the Liberty of the Press, held at the Globe Tavern, Fleet-street, on Thursday November 19,

Mr. —— FOX in the Chair,

IT was resolved to petition the Honourable House of Commons against the Bill now pending, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," as an infringement of that palladium of British liberty, the Freedom of the Press. A Petition was accordingly drawn up, agreed to, and now lies for signatures at the Globe Tavern, Fleet-street, and the Shakespeare Tavern, Piazza, Covent Garden.

To the worthy INHABITANTS of the Ward of ALDGATE.

GENTLEMEN,

HAVING, with the following persons, Andrew Gage, Liveryman of the Vintners Company, Henry Higgins, Liveryman of the Needle-makers Company

Company, John Grey, Liveryman of the Blackſmiths Company, Benjamin Prichard, Liveryman of the Coopers Company, Edward Uttin, Liveryman of the Wire-drawers Company, attended at the reſidence of the ſeveral inhabitants for their ſignatures to a reſpectful and dutiful Addreſs to his Majeſty, expreſſive of their abhorrence of the atrocious and malignant attack upon his Sacred Perſon, and their firm determination ſtrenuouſly to ſupport our glorious and happy Conſtitution, and have, in conſequence, obtained three hundred reſpectable names.

But that every individual in the Ward may have an opportunity of teſtifying his zeal and attachment to the Government and Conſtitution, as well as oppoſition to ſuch men and meaſures as endeavour to ſpread anarchy and confuſion in this kingdom, and thereby deſtroy domeſtic peace and public proſperity,

The Addreſs is left at the Minerva Library, Leadenhall-ſtreet, where ſuch perſons as are deſirous to add their names will be pleaſed to peruſe the contents, as it is deſired to have, and have only, the voluntary opinions and ſignatures of the loyal Inhabitants.

I am, Gentlemen,
With the greateſt reſpect,
Your moſt obedient and devoted ſervant,

Minerva Office,
Nov, 18, 1795.

WILLIAM LANE,
Liveryman of the Stationers Company.

ST. ANN's PARISH, Nov. 19, 1795.

A Meeting having been held this day at the houſe of Doctor Barrow, in Soho Square, and it having been determined that it was partial for want of ſufficient Notice, it is recommended to the Inhabitants of this Pariſh to meet their Fellow Pariſhioners at the Veſtry Room, on Monday next, the 23d inſtant, at twelve o'clock. The Friends of Freedom will then have an opportunity to ſupport the Petition to the Houſe of Commons againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament, ſtriking at the vital liberties of the People, as handed down to them by their forefathers, and eſtabliſhed by the Bill of Rights.

PARISH OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS.

At a Meeting of ſeveral reſpectable Inhabitants, Houſeholders of this Pariſh, held This Day, Thurſday, the 19th November,

The EARL of LAUDERDALE in the Chair,

IT was reſolved to attend the Meeting called by John Drummond, Eſq. and the independent Pariſhioners who gave their free and cordial aſſent to the Petition moved on Monday laſt by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, in Palace Yard, as well as thoſe who approve of the ſame, are requeſted to meet This Day (Friday) at the Globe Tavern, Craven-ſtreet, at twelve o'clock at Noon preciſely, to ſupport their Petition to the Houſe of Commons, and exert themſelves, perhaps for the laſt time, to preſerve the Conſtitution of their Country.

N. B. Copies of the Petition lie at the Globe for additional ſignatures.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

PROTEST

AGAINST THE PASSING OF THE NEW TREASON BILL IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

Diſſentient,

I. BECAUSE we conceive this Bill to be founded on a falſe pretence. It recites a daring outrage on his Majeſty's perſon (which we feel with the utmoſt horror), and purports to provide further remedies againſt ſuch practices, whilſt in reality it affords no additional ſecurity whatever to his Majeſty's perſon, and leaves us to regret a deep and irreparable injury to the Laws and Conſtitution of our Country, by making the compaſſing, imagining, inventing, and deviſing *the levying War* a ſubſtantive Treaſon; thereby departing in a moſt dangerous and unjuſtifiable manner from the Statute of the twenty-fifth of Edward the Third; the ſalutary proviſions of which we cannot be tempted to abandon by the example of temporary Statutes, whoſe doubtful policy ſtands in oppoſition to a Law, in which the wiſdom of our anceſtors has been ſo repeatedly recogniſed by the Legiſlature, and ſo ſtrongly confirmed by the permanent experience of its benefits.

II. Becauſe the free diſcuſſion of the adminiſtration of Government in all its branches, by writing, ſpeaking, and meeting, for the purpoſe of repreſenting grievances to any of the three branches of the Legiſlature, has afforded the beſt protection to the liberties of the People, and is the undoubted inherent right of Engliſhmen. Yet this Bill erects into a high miſdemeanor the exerciſe of this moſt valuable privilege, and inflicts, in certain caſes, the pains and penalties of tranſportation for the offences which it creates, a puniſhment in the caſe of miſdemeanors, thus generally conſtituted, as unprecedented in the hiſtory of our laws, as it is unneceſſary and unconſtitutional.

III. Becauſe the extenſion of the Treaſon Laws, and the creating of new miſdemeanors, is an alarming encroachment on the ſecurity of the ſubject, and affords no additional protection to his Majeſty's Perſon and Government; for the ſtate of every King, Ruler, and Governor of any Realm, Dominion, or Commonalty, ſtandeth and conſiſteth more aſſured by the love and favour of the ſubjects towards their Sovereign, Ruler, and Governor, than in the dread and fear of thoſe laws with rigorous pains and extreme puniſhments, which have at all times diſgraced our code. Hiſtory, however, ſhews us, that by ſucceeding Legiſlatures, our Statute Book

Book has, with every mark of generous indignation, been uniformly cleared of these temporary and unconſtitutional excreſcences, a circumſtance which we now regard as a ſolemn warning againſt creating new and unheard-of miſdemeanors, or altering the Treaſon Laws of our Country.

(Signed) BEDFORD,
DERBY,
LAUDERDALE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, NOV. 19.

THE Sheriffs of London preſented a Petition from the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of London, requeſting Parliament to adopt ſome meaſures, *for a limited time*, to prevent the meeting of Societies, &c. to which they attributed the late attack upon the King, which was ordered to lie upon the Table.

The Order of the Day for the ſecond reading of the Bill for the better ſecuring his Majeſty's Perſon, &c. being read, and the queſtion being put "That this Bill be now read a ſecond time,"

MR. FOX ſaid, he did not mean to argue on the principle of the preſent Bill at this time. He roſe for the purpoſe of ſaying, that he ſhould enter into that ſubject when the queſtion ſhould be put "That the Speaker do leave the Chair," which, he underſtood, was likely to take place on Monday next. He took this courſe, he ſaid, on account of the unavoidable abſence of many honourable friends of his, and particularly of a very learned and very able one (Mr. Erſkine). This, he begged to be underſtood—that his now abſtaining from debate was not to be conſtrued into any approbation of the principle of the Bill, or into a dereliction of any one ſentiment which he had uttered on former occaſions on meaſures ſimilar to the preſent; on the contrary, he retained all the objections which he had formerly urged, and he ſhould deliver his ſentiments on that ſubject on Monday.

MR. WILLIAM SMITH ſaid, he was unavoidably abſent on the diſcuſſion of meaſures nearly connected with the Bill now before the Houſe. Not having an opportunity before to deliver his opinion, he thought it proper now to ſay, that he felt himſelf compelled by every ſentiment of duty to oppoſe this Bill. He oppoſed it on this ground, that it was one of thoſe meaſures that would be ineffectual with regard to the objects that they profeſſed to attain; that it is one of thoſe meaſures which have no tendency to maintain that tranquillity in the country which they profeſs to ſupport.

With reſpect to ſentiments of attachment to the perſon of his Majeſty, it was the cuſtom with many to make declarations upon that ſubject. If he felt it neceſſary to make profeſſions of that kind he ſhould follow their example; but it was a conſtitutional practice of that Houſe, and therefore nothing to the contrary ſhould be imputed to any Gentleman who was a Member of it, becauſe he did not boaſt of his loyalty to reſiſt any attempts againſt his Majeſty's perſon, crown, or dignity. Too many repetitions of that kind tended only to debar men from purſuing the true intereſts of either; and he confeſſed he thought that meaſures of coercion and of force againſt the expreſſion of opinion, beyond what the law is, are inexpedient and unneceſſary, eſpecially at this time. He thought that the law, as it ſtands at preſent, fully ſufficient for all the purpoſes for which theſe Bills were held forth; and that, if they ſhould be attempted to be enforced, they would defeat the end which their promoters profeſſed to have in view; for theſe reaſons he ſhould not go further into the ſubject to-night, but he could not ſuffer this Bill to paſs in any ſtage of it, without calling, as it appeared to him to be his duty, for the ſenſe of the Houſe.

The Houſe divided,

For the queſtion, - -	64
Againſt it, - - -	22

Adjourned.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

THE following are the names of the virtuous Minority who ſtood forward the advocates of Britiſh liberty in the Common Council:

Alderman Skinner (late Lord Mayor)
—— Sir William Plomer
—— Combe
—— Pickett
—— Newman
Meſſrs. Thorpe
—— Phillips
—— Joſ. Pope
Deputy Lincoln
Meſſrs. Taddy
—— Atkinſon
—— Cope
—— Albion Cox
—— Bradford
Deputy Brewer
Meſſrs. Bodley
—— Thomas Dornford
—— Sharpe
Deputy Bunn
—— Aldridge
—— Tomkins
—— Cowley
—— Raulins
—— Howell

Meſſrs. Appleton
—— Goodbehere
—— Paſhley
—— Simmons
—— Perkins
—— James Brewer
—— Tho. B. Pratt
—— Coleman
—— Boucock
—— Sanders
—— Wright
—— Herring
—— Warner
—— Dowler
—— Figgins
—— Darwin
—— Wadd
—— Wiggins

	38
Tellers (Meſſrs. Griffiths and Lamb)	2
Aldermen	5
Total	45

COMMON HALL.

AT the largeſt and moſt ſelect Meeting of the Livery of London which ever was remembered, yeſterday, after the Hall was opened by the proper officer,

Mr. Alderman COMBE opened the buſineſs of the day, by ſtating, That although the Requiſition which had been juſt read had not been ſigned by him, he confeſſed that he was the perſon who firſt ſuggeſted the propriety of convening the Livery of London, in order that their ſenſe may be taken upon the important queſtion which was this day to be agitated; that they were called together, not for the conſideration whether in aid of the Revenue the extenſion of the Exciſe Laws ſhould be acquieſced in or petitioned againſt; not whether a particular law would operate partially on a particular ſet of people, but whether they would conſent to ſurrender the fundamental and moſt eſſential privilege which belonged to the people; that it was not a year ſince that he preſumed to offer himſelf as their Repreſentative in Parliament; that, beſides having to encounter the great talents, and the great weight of influence which belonged to the character and ſituation of his competitor, his enemies had inſinuated, and even aſſerted, that he was in his principles and practice inimical to the Conſtitution of the Country. He availed himſelf of the very numerous and reſpectable aſſemblage of the Livery, to whom he was then addreſſing himſelf, to declare explicitly that, if there has exiſted, or if there does exiſt in this country any party, whether great in talent and ſmall in number, or great in number and little in conſequence, who are degenerate enough to ſeek for confuſion in this country, he never was, nor ever would be, of that party: But while there was in this country a party of too much property to riſk, by wiſhing for convulſion, combined with talents too acute and diſcriminating to accede to meaſures calculated either to create deſpotiſm or anarchy, to ſuch a party he was attached by principle, and to perſons maintaining ſuch principles he ſhould ever be proud to give his little aſſiſtance. The time was now arrived, at which it would be determined by the Livery of London, whether thoſe were moſt attached to the Conſtitution of the Country, who regarded, with equal anxiety, the prerogative of the Crown or the rights of the People, or thoſe who, by acquieſcing in the introduction of thoſe Bills, now to be approved or diſapproved of, conſented to deprive their fellow ſubjects of their deareſt rights, and by giving to the ſervants of the Crown an additional portion of the national power, leſſened in the ſame degree that ſhare of it which belongs to the People. The right of petitioning has never been queſtioned; the perſons who ſupport theſe Bills do not queſtion it, but they were about to take away the right and convert it into a permiſſion; they endeavoured, by their argument for adopting it for a limited time, to ſoften it down; but, in his opinion, the prerogative of the Crown, and the rights of the People, ought to be held equally ſacred; to touch them was to endanger them; to encroach upon them was to deſtroy them; and, in the event of either, the Conſtitution was impaired. It had been aſſerted, that ſuch a meaſure was rendered neceſſary by the outrage committed upon the King; but could the Livery of London, or any other independent body of Engliſhmen, ſay, in their conſciences, that ſuch an aſſertion was founded on evidence ſufficiently ſtrong to induce them to conſent to a deprivation of rights? To conſent to thoſe Bills would be to acknowledge,

ledge a participation in the crime, for the operation of them would involve every Britiſh ſubject in the puniſhment. That he held in his hand certain Reſolutions, which he would take the liberty to read to them, and afterwards take the ſenſe of the Livery on each ſeparately.

He then read a ſeries of Reſolutions, and moved the firſt of them, which was ſeconded in a ſhort ſpeech by Mr. Deputy Thorpe.

Mr. Alderman SKINNER ſaid, he did not chooſe to give a ſilent vote upon the preſent moſt important occaſion. No man could more heartily deteſt the late inſult upon his Majeſty than he did; and he would willingly give up any portion of his time and labour to detect and bring to condign puniſhment the abandoned perpetrator. But it did not appear to him that theſe obnoxious Bills now brought into Parliament could, in any way, anſwer the ends for which they were pretended to be enacted. He thought them a moſt violent attack upon the deareſt and moſt valuable rights of Engliſhmen; that they opened the door to the moſt complete arbitrary ſyſtem, and tended to reduce to nothing the whole of the influence which the voice of the people in this country is intitled to poſſeſs in the public concerns. As for his part, he conſidered the freedom of public diſcuſſion, the freedom of conſtitutionally expreſſing the public opinion, either by printing or ſpeaking, as the only means the people had of protecting themſelves againſt the attempts of corrupt or ambitious Miniſters, when they endeavoured by falſe alarms, or otherwiſe, to perpetuate their own power on the ruins of the rights of the People. He had long enjoyed the bleſſings of freedom, he knew its value, and he would never abandon it but with his life. He therefore gave his hearty aſſent to the motion.

Mr. Alderman LUSHINGTON ſaid, that he was ready to go as far as any gentleman in that Hall in ſupport of the true privileges of the People; but that he muſt be allowed to ſay, that the Bills in queſtion were no infringement upon thoſe privileges. The one Bill was intended to ſecure the Crown from inſult, which every good citizen muſt anxiouſly wiſh to do, and the other to ſecure to the People the exerciſe of their right to meet and diſcuſs all public matters under certain reſtrictions, which he conſidered as no way injurious to that right—[Here there was a very loud cry of diſapprobation.]—Mr. Luſhington proceeded for a conſiderable time to argue in the ſame ſtrain, and was followed by Mr. Alderman Pickett, who ſpoke in favour of the Motions, as did Mr. Alderman Newnham.

Mr. Alderman NEWNHAM began a ſpeech of conſiderable length, with declaring his attachment to the cauſe of freedom. He admitted that the Bills in queſtion might by ſome be deemed an infringement upon the rights of the People, but they were, in his opinion, neceſſary, and he did not doubt but the Miniſters would make them merely temporary.—[A great cry "*not for one day, nor one moment.*"]

Mr. W. SMITH (M. P.) apologized for offering himſelf to the attention of the Livery, as he had not for many years been in the habit of attending their public meetings. But on a day like this, when the queſtion to be decided was, Whether Engliſhmen were to remain free, or to conſign themſelves voluntarily over to deſpotiſm? he could not have juſtified himſelf to his own conſcience if he had not come forward in the moſt public manner to expreſs his abhorrence of this moſt infamous attempt in his Majeſty's Miniſters to overturn and deſtroy the liberties of their country. Means the moſt artful and fraudulent had been uſed to deceive the people, and advan-

advantage had been taken of the late infamous attack on his Majesty, to libel both the King and the People. No man with honest intentions would say that the King is not beloved by his subjects, even almost to adoration; and surely the natural effect of such Bills as these can only be to weaken that affection and turn that love to dislike. He therefore entreated that Meeting to avert so great an evil. [He was interrupted several times, and at last withdrew.]

Sir B. HAMET came forward, but the majority of the Hall were so disgusted at the interruption given to Mr. Smith, that they would not suffer him to speak.

The Lord Mayor having objected to the 2d and 3d Resolutions, Mr. Combe said, that understanding that two of the Resolutions were deemed by the Lord Mayor not necessary to the purpose of the Meeting, according to the terms of the Requisition, he took the liberty to withdraw them, as he wished only for the opinion of the Livery to be fairly obtained. These Resolutions were as follows:

II. Resolved, That they are fully convinced, that the Laws now in being are equal to the protection of our beloved Sovereign; and that they are also sufficient to suppress or disperse any Meetings which are seditious or tumultuous: Wherefore, in proportion as they revere the Constitution, they are alarmed at two Bills now depending in Parliament, the tendency of which is to prevent a free and public discussion of public measures.

III. Resolved, That, in their estimation, the odious principle of these Bills cannot be diminished by the operation of them being limited to a short duration of time. By admitting the introduction of them into the House of Commons, the Representatives of the People have implied a disloyalty and disaffection in their Constituents which the Livery of London indignantly disown, and have acted upon an opinion which they cannot adopt, and which the experience of more than a century has falsified, viz. That the safety of the Sovereign is incompatible with the rights of the People.

The other Resolutions was then put and carried with a vast majority. Never was the voice of the City of London more decisively pronounced.

The LORD MAYOR came forward and said, that he must declare before God and his Country they had been most fairly carried; and now that he knew the sense of his Constituents he should act accordingly.

In a Meeting or Assembly of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Liverymen of the several Companies of the City of London, in Common Hall assembled, at the Guildhall of the said City, on Friday, the 20th day of November, 1795, "To consider the expediency of instructing their Representatives in Parliament to vote against two Bills, now depending in Parliament, for the declared purpose of preventing a public discussion of public measures, and thereby tending to deprive British Subjects of their unquestionable Rights."

Resolved Unanimously,

THAT the Livery of London, firmly retaining that unalterable attachment to the Constitution of this Country, as composed of King, Lords, and Commons, which they have so uniformly declared, reflect, with detestation and abhorrence, upon the abominable outrage which has lately been committed against the sacred person of the King; and they will each, in his individual capacity, give their best assistance to discover the atrocious offender.

Refolved, That regarding, with equal veneration, the due Prerogative of the Crown, and the juft Rights of the People, as afferted at the glorious Revolution; and in the exercife of that privilege, which the Livery of London have long enjoyed, they do hereby inftruct their Reprefentatives in Parliament to vote againft paffing into law either of the two Bills now depending in the Honourable the Houfe of Commons, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government, againft Treafonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies."

Refolved Unanimoufly, That thefe Refolutions be delivered to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, requefting that they may be figned by the Town Clerk, and printed in all the Morning and Evening Papers, and that Copies thereof may be prefented to each of the Reprefentatives in Parliament of this City.

Refolved Unanimoufly, That the Thanks of this Common Hall be returned to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor for his upright and impartial conduct in this day's bufinefs.

RIX.

MEETING, the 17th November, 1795, at ST. ANDREW's HALL, NORWICH.

AT Half paft Eleven o'Clock, SIGISMUND TRAFFORD, Efq. being unanimoufly called to the Chair, opened the bufinefs of the Meeting by the following Addrefs:

GENTLEMEN,

I am thoroughly convinced there are many perfons in this Affembly more capable than myfelf of filling this Chair; yet, as it is your pleafure to call me to it, I will cheerfully endeavour to fulfil the incumbent duties, according to the beft of my abilities.

Gentlemen, the bufinefs under confideration is, two Bills now depending in Parliament, whofe profeffed defign is to extend the laws of Treafon, and to abridge thofe liberties we have now enjoyed for four hundred years, very much to our own fatisfaction and happinefs, and greatly to the honour and perfonal fecurity of our Sovereign. The exifting laws were enacted in the 25th year of that moft powerful, moft enlightened, and moft popular King, Edward III, and have ever fince been confidered as the greateft bleffing, and moft permanent fafeguard of the fubject. How far the prefent Bills are confiftent with this, or indeed any other free Conftitution, fituated as you have placed me, I muft leave you to determine; but if you think (as from my foul I do) that it is a flagitious attempt upon our liberties, you have not only the right, but it is your facred duty, to inform your Reprefentatives of your opinion, which I hope, Gentlemen, you will do, in that moderate, I fay that moderate, but firm and decifive tone, which it behoves men to maintain, who are contending for, and defending, interefts the neareft and deareft to themfelves and their pofterity.

Mr. E. S. TURNER now read the claufes of two Bills, viz. Grenville's Bill, intituled, "An Act for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government, againft Treafonable and Seditious Practices and in

Attempts." And Pitt's Bill, intituled, " A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies."

The hissings having ceased which marked the Hall's abhorrence of the Bills, Mr. Wilks, the Norfolk Farmer, came forward to move that a Petition be presented to the House of Commons, praying that House would put its decisive negative upon the Bills in question. The Farmer prefaced his motion with a speech, of which the following is the substance;

CITIZENS,

After having heard the present Bills, is it possible for any man to preserve silence? However other Gentlemen may feel on the occasion, with me it is impossible. I come forward therefore not as a partizan, not to oppose the measures of Administration for the sake of opposition, but from a conviction that every man is bound, bound by an attachment to the Government and Constitution of his Country, as by law established at the glorious Revolution of 1688, by his just claim to the once acknowledged rights of Britons, by the respect and reverence he feels for the sacred memory of his illustrious ancestors, and by the obligations he is under to his family, country, and posterity, to resist by every legal means the present Bills, and to do every thing in his power to prevent their passing into Laws. Methinks I hear somebody exclaim—Why? Why oppose them? Why, Sirs, I will tell you why, for these reasons: First, Because they are absolutely superfluous and unnecessary. Secondly, Because it is impossible they should answer the ends for which they are professedly brought forward. And, thirdly, because they are detestable in their nature, and likely to be dreadful in their operation and effects. To prove they are superfluous and unnecessary requires very, very little argument indeed; facts, those stubborn things, which will bear no contradiction, set this point beyond the power of dispute. One object of the Bills is, to prevent or punish treasonable or seditious practices. To prevent crimes is beyond the power of any Government; all it can do, therefore, is to punish in order to prevent. Here then let me ask, Has not the Government of this Country always had it in its power to punish Treason and Sedition? Let any man take a retrospective view of the history of his own country, and point out the reign in which the scaffold has not been stained with the blood of traitors, and in which seditious persons have not suffered pains and penalties, and I myself will lift up both hands for passing the present Bills. Treason and sedition ought to be punished, and if the now existing laws have not provided punishment for such offences, they ought to do it now; but while a Hardy, a Tooke, a Thelwall, a Holt, a Symonds, a Ridgeway, a Winterbotham, and an hundred more of that description of sufferers present themselves to my imagination, I shall strenuously contend that laws now exist to punish treason and sedition; and that, therefore, the present Bills are absolutely superfluous and unnecessary. Say then, is it not beneath the dignity of grave senators to waste their time in framing superfluous laws, or,

'In dropping buckets into empty wells,
'And growing old in drawing nothing up.'

In the next place, I oppose the Bills on the ground of impotency. According to my views, it will be impossible they should answer the ends for which they are professedly intended. Another avowed object of them is, to pre-

preferve the Perfon and Government of his Majefty—glorious object indeed! Without a farcafm give me leave to exclaim—May the King live for ever! but fo far from preferving, they will endanger both his Perfon and Government, by rendering the Monarch an object of terror, and by alienating the heart of the fubject from the Law and the King. Sirs, make a man a tyrant, and you diveft him of every thing amiable originally attached to the man—you hold him up to univerfal abhorrence, and place him in the moft perilous and critical fituation in which he can poffibly exift. Perhaps you will believe me, when I tell you, that fuch is the philanthropy of our gracious Sovereign, fuch the mildnefs of his difpofition, and the goodnefs of his heart, it would be no eafy tafk to make him a tyrant: but fhould the two branches of the Legiflature frame tyrannic laws, and prevail on his Majefty to give reluctantly his royal affent and fignature, it is to be dreaded they would, by that act, fign and feal his death warrant, build his fepulchre, and toll his paffing-bell.

The fame idea attaches to the Law which I have applied to the King—Let the Law be a tranfcript of the divine Law, juft and good, and it cannot fail to be refpected and obeyed; but make the Law a tyrant, and you make it hateful, and though men may fubmit to it for a while, the time will come when they will burn the ftatute books, and overturn that fyftem of Government which can only be fupported by the power of the fword. If this be the true ftate of the cafe, I may venture to maintain, we are all bound by our loyal concern for the perfonal fafety of his Majefty, by our ardent wifh for the ftability of his Throne, and the prefervation of his Government, to pray that thefe Bills may not pafs into Laws.

The Bills now before you, Gentlemen, ought to be oppofed, not only becaufe they are fuperfluous and unneceffary, and can anfwer no good end to the nation, or the Sovereign, but becaufe they are deteftable in their nature, and likely to be dreadful in their operation.—Let me here obferve, to conftitute a good law, it is neceffary it fhould prohibit actions detrimental to the State, enjoin actions for the good of fociety, and hold forth rewards and punifhments, to give it force fuited to the nature of its prohibitions and injunctions. Let me afk you, Gentlemen, is this the cafe with the laws in queftion? What do they prohibit? They prohibit indirectly all meetings for public purpofes—they prohibit indirectly all liberty of fpeech and of the prefs—they are, in fact, a daring attack on the beft rights of Britons, defigned to perpetuate the abufes of Government, by the fuppreffion of all popular focieties, and free inveftigation, by laying an undue reftraint on political difcuffion. You may meet, it is true, fhould thefe Bill pafs, but how? With a venal magiftrate at your head. You will be allowed to fpeak in future, it is true, but how?—as I do now?—(here a general cry of, No, no, no, took place.)—You have anticipated my anfwer, faid the fpeaker, by your juft reply of, No, no; for though we may fpeak in future, it muft be under the controul of a venal magiftrate, who is to be the fole judge of the legality of what we fay.—If he thinks we fay any thing difrefpectful of his Majefty and Government, and calculated to bring the Conftitution into difrepute, he can order his fatellites to feize our perfons, he can difperfe the company by proclamation, and death may be the confequence of refifting his defpotic mandate.

Now, Gentlemen, what becomes of the Bill of Rights? It is violated, it is repealed. The 5th article of that Bill declares, it is the right of the

fub-

fubject to petition the King; but how, Gentlemen, will it be poffible to petition under the reftriction of thefe Bills! If we attempt to ftate our grievances, the magiftrate, perhaps, will declare the grievances of which we complain do not exift; he may declare the meeting to be improper, and break it up. The 10th claufe of the Bill of Rights declares, that unufual and cruel punifhments fhall not be inflicted; but thefe Bills are intended to enact, that an endeavour to bring the Government into contempt and difrepute fhall be punifhed with the lofs of liberty and property, and that refifting the arbitrary will of a venal fervant of the Crown fhall fubjugate the offender to immediate death. Tell me, is not this to inflict unufual and cruel punifhment, and a direct violation of our acknowledged rights?

Roufe, countrymen! your liberties are invaded; refcue them from the hands of unjuft affailants, by an unanimous refolve, that this meeting do petition Parliament, that thefe Bills may not be fuffered to pafs into laws.

TOOKE HARWOOD rofe to fecond the motion for a Petition, which he prefaced by the following addrefs:

CITIZENS,

Had this meeting been called merely to oppofe party againft party, I fhould not have been prefent at it; or being prefent, fhould not have taken the trouble to have opened my lips on either fide. The contentions of parties have in a great degree contributed to bring you to the precipice on which you now ftand; they are generally ftruggles for the loaves and fifhes, and the hard-gotten earnings of the poor always the prize and price of their credulity. I love no party, and I am well aware no party can love me.

If merely the putting down wicked Minifters and their mifcreant tools was our object, it would not be worth our contention, for they are making fuch rapid ftrides towards arbitrary power, that they muft inevitably foon work their own deftruction, and fall victims to their own ambition. But, alas! my fellow-citizens, however furely they may be working their own deftruction in the end, what is to become of the unhappy people of this country, funk as they muft then be, nay even now are, in the loweft abyfs of unexampled mifery—many, very many of you, my poor fellow-citizens, may perhaps at this time be fuffering all the unhappinefs attendant on extreme poverty; and acute muft be your feelings, not for yourfelves alone, but for your helplefs children crying for bread. All this you muft be well aware is owing to the want of a due reprefentation of the people in Parliament; and, what is worfe, it is partly your own fault. But I ought not to upbraid you; for fuch is the iniquity of your oppreffors, that they make your very miferies the touchftone by which they force you to vote for fome worthlefs individual whom they choofe to exalt, merely that he in return may provide for them at your expence. Moft of the fupporters of the prefent meafures are actual receivers of the bounties of Government, or expectants ftill more zealous, even in the dirtieft of offices. They have moft daringly plunged you into almoft inextricable mifery, and to complete your misfortunes, and their own triumph, fupport the prefent Bills to fupprefs all popular meetings, as the only means of maintaining their tottering power. Minifters and their fatellites fhould know from former examples, that people, whilft they may complain, do not ceafe to hope; but when wretchednefs is forced to hide itfelf in filence and defpair, it becomes fullen and dangerous, for who will

will not STRIKE when they are likely to be hanged or tranſported for ſpeaking.

Had theſe Bills paſſed laſt year, nine innocent men would have loſt their lives—Miniſters then furniſhed themſelves with pretences as infamous and falſe as their preſent accuſations of the Correſponding Society being the cauſe of the inſults offered to his Majeſty. I am a member of that ſociety, and, I confeſs, I feel myſelf elated when I boaſt that honour—the men that compoſe that ſociety are good and true men—men of too much information to think of riot and confuſion—ſo far from being dangerous to the Government, they have been the beſt friends of the Conſtitution, by endeavouring to preſerve the liberties of the ſubject, and to extirpate the locuſts that feed upon its vitals. Diſcuſſion is the only means to ſupport a free Conſtitution. But the Government or Conſtitution we ſhall be under when the preſent Bills paſs, can alone be ſupported by the bayonet. But Miniſters, and their ſatellites, would do well to remember, that arbitrary acts have always preceded the overthrow of oppreſſion, and to ſtop ere it is too late! for if they drive the people, now ſo patient under their ſufferings, too far down the gulph of miſery, and no alternative left but death or tranſportation if they complain, what will be the conſequence? Is it not to be feared that they may conſider arms as the laſt reſource of miſery driven to deſpair. I love my neighbour as myſelf, if he be good and virtuous—if wicked, I wiſh him to live and to repent. But if ever ſuch a period arrives, where can they then hide themſelves? No force on their part can reſiſt, no flight can ſave! It is a duty we owe to our country, to our families and ourſelves, to do our utmoſt to prevent theſe Bills paſſing, as the beſt means to prevent ſuch calamities, and never relax, though the ſyſtem of terror hangs over our heads. Some of us, probably, may fall a ſacrifice; but I have made my mind up on all occaſions, and cannot do better juſtice to my feelings on that ſubject, than by quoting the words of Joſeph Gerald, that virtuous patriot, who fell a victim to Scotch Law; who, when he was doomed to the infamous ſentence, obſerved, "that out of my aſhes will ariſe a flame that muſt inevitably conſume the tyrants of the earth."

ALDERMAN ROBERT HARVEY then prefaced his ſpeech by declaring his readineſs to aſſent to all that had been ſaid of reverence for the Bill of Rights, love for the Conſtitution, and regard for the liberties of his country; but in the preſent criſis he contended, that any internal diviſion would encourage our enemies to perſevere in the war, and render the terms of peace more degrading. He profeſſed to be perfectly willing to confide in the wiſdom, juſtice, and patriotiſm of our Legiſlature; each individual of which was amenable to the laws as well as the meaneſt citizens. He was happy in ſaying, that he modelled his conduct upon the example of a man high in the eſtimation both of God and man, the patriotic Mr. Wilberforce, (*a cry here from the crowd of, a hypocrite! a hypocrite!*) and aſſerted, that the people would have a right of aſſembling after the paſſing of the Bills; and he thought that oppoſition to them was uſeleſs, if not dangerous.

MR. WILKS in reply to Mr. Harvey, granted that each member of the Legiſlature is at preſent amenable to the law; but that the preſent Bills went to make them a privileged order. The very act, obſerved he, that grants *them* liberty of ſpeech, implies, that *men* in *general* are to be deprived of that privilege.

privilege. He granted alſo, that it might be lawful to meet under the preſent Bills, but it muſt be with the conſent, and under the control of ſome Juſtice of the Peace, or other Officer, to whom we muſt bow the ſuppliant knee, with a "*Pray, Sir, what may I ſay?*" And perhaps the very Gentleman who ſpoke laſt, may be the very perſon empowered to negative all our proceedings. Mr. Wilks profeſſed to be a friend to free diſcuſſion, but as the preſent was a conteſt between the rights of the ſubject and the power of the magiſtrate, he thought it rather indelicate in Mr. H. to appear the abettor of the preſent meaſures, which did not appear to have one advocate preſent except himſelf.

Mr. Trafford and Mr. Ollyett Woodhouse having now read the Petition on different parts of the Huſtings, for the convenience of the meeting, it was moved to adopt it as the Petition of that meeting.

Mr. W. Barnard having ſeconded the motion, it was agreed to by univerſal acclamation.

The following Gentlemen were now mentioned, and called for by the public, as a Committee for procuring ſignatures, and forwarding the Petition to Parliament:

S. Trafford, Eſq.
James Crowe, Eſq.
J. G. Baſely, Eſq.
B. Gurney, Eſq.
William Barnard,
Thomas Barnard,
John Cozens,
Jonathan Davey,
R. Dinmore, jun.
Tooke Harwood,
John March,
John Pitchford, jun.
Edward Rigby,
Wm. Taylor, jun.
E. S. Turner,
Mark Wilks,
Wm. White,
Ollyett Woodhouſe
and
Wm. Youngman.

E. Rigby, Eſq. moved the Thanks of the Meeting to the Chairman, for his ſpirited and timely exertions in the cauſe of freedom. Thanks were alſo voted to the Duke of Bedford, Mr. Fox, the Whig Club, and all the friends of freedom, who have ſtood forward as the advocates of the people, to oppoſe the preſent daring outrage againſt the rights of Britons.—The buſineſs of the day being over, Mr. Wilks adviſed the multitude to retire to their reſpective places of abode with order and decorum, and to demonſtrate to their fellow-citizens, by a peaceable uniform deportment, how firmly they were attached to the NATION, the LAW, and the *king*.

The advice had its due effect, and the meeting diſperſed.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled, the Petition of the Inhabitants of the City of Norwich,

Sheweth,

THAT your petitioners viewing with extreme ſurpriſe, and with great alarm, the introduction of two Bills into Parliament, the one intituled, "An Act for the Safety of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and the other, "An Act to prevent Seditious Aſſemblies;" which they conceive to be infringements upon the Conſtitution, and violations of their beſt rights and liberties, have

met in Common Hall, to beg of your Honourable Houſe, that you will at this awful criſis act as behoves the Repreſentatives of a People, jealous of their liberties, and oppoſe your authority to this innovation, unprecedented ſince the Revolution of 1688.

That your Petitioners have always conſidered the law enacted in the 25th year of King Edward III. as ſince modified by divers ſtatutes, to be the greateſt ſafeguard of the ſubject, and the beſt perſonal ſecurity of the Sovereign.

That whilſt your Petitioners lament the late inſult offered to the perſon of the King, they cannot but think, that the exiſting laws are adequate to the puniſhment of the offenders, and if properly enforced, ſufficient to prevent a repetition of ſuch outrages.

That your Petitioners, knowing the diſtreſſed ſituation of the great majority of the people, are decidedly of opinion, that to deprive them of the means of complaining will, in the iſſue, drive them to meaſures, which the humanity of your Petitioners moſt ſincerely deprecates.

Your Petitioners, therefore, earneſtly pray, that your Honourable Houſe will put your deciſive negative upon theſe Bills; which, if they paſs into laws, *will render nugatory the 5th clauſe of the Bill of Rights, and overthrow the moſt valuable privileges of Engliſhmen.*

And your Petitioners, &c.

On the 22d. inſt. the above Petition, with 5284 ſignatures, was ſent to the Honourable C. J. Fox, and by him preſented to the Houſe the next day.

SURRY MEETING.

Epſom, 20th Nov.

THE Sheriff addreſſed the Meeting in a few words, ſtating that he had convened them, at the requeſt of ſeveral reſpectable perſons, to conſider on an Addreſs, &c. In conſequence of this requeſt he had publiſhed an Advertiſement, which he read, and took occaſion to diſown any other advertiſement or hand-bill. He ſaid, he at preſent ſaw no occaſion to add a word more, but that, if he thought it neceſſary, in the courſe of the debate, he ſhould claim his privilege in ſpeaking as a Freeholder.

The Sheriff thought that the two queſtions ought to be ſeparately diſcuſſed, on which Mr. Fox ſeemed to think that decorum required the Addreſs to precede the Petition. This being decided,

MR. TRECOTHICK, after briefly ſtating the calamities of the country and the miſeries of war, went on to obſerve, that Miniſters ſeemed reſolved fully to complete the ſyſtem they had adopted, and entirely demoliſh the liberties of their country. He then read an Addreſs to his Majeſty, requeſting his Majeſty to ſet on foot an immediate negotiation for Peace.

MR. PETRE ſeconded Mr. Trecothick.

MR. STONESTREET came forward and ſaid, that he thought the Addreſs utterly improper, and that a good peace could never be obtained, by forcing Miniſters to make one immediately. He therefore propoſed an Amendment, in fact a new Addreſs, deploring the miſeries of war, but congratulating his Majeſty, that it was a juſt war, provoked by unjuſt aggreſſion, and deſiring his Majeſty to make peace whenever he could do it upon juſt, honourable, and ſafe grounds.

A de-

A debate took place, on this motion and Amendment. The Amendment was vehemently supported by Mr. Stoneſtreet, Mr. Onſlow, and the Sheriff. It was oppoſed by Mr. Fox, Lord William Ruſſell, and Sir Joſeph Mawbey, while Lord Grantly took a middle courſe, and declared that he thought neither neceſſary.

On putting the Addreſs for Peace, and the Amendment to the ſhew of hands, the Sheriff ſaid, that he thought the majority was for the Amendment. The meeting divided, when on the contrary it appeared, that there were more than two to one for the Addreſs for Peace, moved by Mr. Trecothick. The Sheriff then declared, that the Addreſs for Peace was carried.

Mr. Trecothick then moved for a Petition to the Houſe of Commons, againſt the two Bills now pending in Parliament, which threatened the overthrow of our Liberties. This motion was alſo ſeconded by Mr. Petre.

Another debate took place on this motion, which was oppoſed by Lord Onſlow, Mr. Onſlow, Mr. Stoneſtreet, and the Sheriff; and moſt ably ſupported by Mr. Fox and other Gentlemen.—It was carried by a great majority.

Sir Joseph Mawbey then moved,

"That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Lord William Ruſſell, the worthy Repreſentative in Parliament for this country, for his oppoſition to the preſent ruinous and unneceſſary War, and for his ſteady ſupport of the Liberty of the People."

This motion was carried with only five diſſentient votes.

The Reſolutions were then ordered to be publiſhed, and Thanks were given to the Chairman.

PARISH OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS.

YESTERDAY a moſt reſpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of this pariſh aſſembled at the Globe Tavern, in Craven-ſtreet. Nothing could be more fair and impartial than this appeal to the People. Lord Hood had proteſted againſt the proceedings in Palace-yard, and deſired that the ſenſe of the citizens might be taken in their pariſhes. In conſequence of this, Mr. Drummond, Banker, at Charing-croſs, requeſted a general Meeting of the pariſhioners. About 400 houſekeepers attended. Mr. Drummond took the Chair. He ſaid, that as Chairman of an Aſſociation eſtabliſhed in 1792, he had requeſted a public Meeting. He had procured from the two Members for the City copies of two Addreſſes to his Majeſty, and of two Petitions to the Houſe of Commons; thoſe from Mr. Fox were the Addreſs and Petition agreed to in Palace-yard by the general Meeting, but he would beg leave to read the whole to the preſent Meeting. Having read them, it was declared to be the ſenſe of the Meeting, that the two ſubjects ſhould be taken up diſtinctly, the Addreſſes by themſelves, and the Petitions by themſelves.

On the ſubject of the atrocious outrage on the King's perſon, there was but one ſentiment of united abhorrence. They would agree to every Addreſs preſented to them that ſhould teſtify the indignation they felt upon that horrible attempt: they concurred in the Addreſs which had been voted in

in Palace-yard, and they adopted that alſo which was now propoſed to them.

But on a motion, that leave ſhould be demanded for the two Petitions which had been read to lie in the veſtry, a debate aroſe. The Petition ſent by Lord Hood was a Petition for ſlavery—a Petition in favour of the two Bills now pending in Parliament for the violation of our liberties, and they would not conſent to ſend ſuch a Petition under the countenance of their recommendation any where *but to the flames*. The motion was therefore *rejected*.

It was then reſolved to concur in the Petition ſo unanimouſly approved of by the general meeting in Palace-yard; and to preſent the Thanks of the Pariſhioners to Mr. Fox for his ſteady oppoſition to the principles of thoſe Bills, and to the rapidity with which they had been hurried through the Houſe. Their Thanks to be preſented to Mr. Fox by their Chairman, to whom, alſo, they voted their cordial Thanks for his fair, liberal, and judicious conduct.

The following is their Advertiſement.

At a Meeting of the Pariſhioners of the Pariſh of St. Martin in the Fields, at the Globe Tavern, 20th of November, 1795,

JOHN DRUMMOND, Esq. in the Chair,

THE Chairman read to the Meeting Copies of two Addreſſes which he had received, one from the Right Honourable Lord Hood, and the other from the Right Honourable Charles James Fox; and alſo two Petitions to the Honourable the Houſe of Commons, which had been delivered to him by the ſaid perſons.

An Addreſs was moved, and unanimouſly agreed to:—(*See* Appendix.)

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the ſaid Addreſs be ſigned by the Chairman, and preſented to his Majeſty by the two Members for Weſtminſter.

The following motion was then put, That leave be obtained from the Veſtry that both the ſaid Petitions, together with copies of the Bills, be left there for ſignatures till Monday night, which was decided in the negative.

It was then moved, That this Meeting do moſt heartily concur in the humble Petition to the Honourable the Houſe of Commons, moved by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and ſo unanimouſly agreed to by the General Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City of Weſtminſter, legally aſſembled in Palace-yard, on Monday laſt, againſt two Bills now pending in Parliament, which threaten the total overthrow of the freedom of popular diſcuſſion, and with it the extinction of the Britiſh Conſtitution.

And this motion being put, it was carried in the affirmative.

It was then moved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to their Repreſentative, the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, for the manly, ſtrenuous and decided oppoſition which he has given to the principle of theſe Bills, and alſo to the unprecedented rapidity with which they have been hurried already through ſo many of their ſtages, ſo as to prevent the people of England from generally expreſſing their deteſtation of the ſame, which was carried unanimouſly.

It was then moved and reſolved, That theſe Thanks be preſented to Mr. Fox by the Chairman.

Reſolved,

Refolved, That thefe Refolutions be figned by the Chairman, and publifhed in the Newfpapers.

JOHN DRUMMOND, Chairman.

The Chairman having quitted the Chair, and Mr. Peter Richardfon (Churchwarden) being called to the fame;

It was refolved unanimoufly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to our worthy and refpectable Chairman, for the fair, liberal, and candid manner in which he called the Parifhioners together, and for his impartial and judicious conduct in the Chair.

P. RICHARDSON, Church-warden.

WARD OF CHEAP.

MR. ALDERMAN BOYDELL IN THE CHAIR.

AFTER the Alderman had opened the meeting, by reading the requifition, Mr. Hanfon requefted to have the opinion of the Meeting, whether they wifhed to have all the refolutions which he held in his hand read firft, or whether they would have them read and debated fingly; the former being determined, he read them. The two firft were put, and carried unanimoufly. The third being read, put, and feconded,

MR. STREET defired, before it was divided upon, he might be allowed to afk the mover, if he had feen the Bills, and what there was in them fo obnoxious; for his part, he thought them abfolutely neceffary.

MR. HANSON produced a printed copy of the Bill for the better fecurity of the King's perfon, obferving that he fhould read only one claufe, from which Gentlemen muft be convinced that (agreeable to Mr. Pitt's ufual mode of deceit) this Bill was not a Bill to protect the perfon of his Majefty, for his Majefty enjoyed already all the protection it was poffible he can receive from the laws, the wealth, the influence, and the innumerable inftances of attachment and affection of the nation; but, on the contrary, this claufe went only to the protection of Mr. Pitt and his colleagues, in the words "Government and Conftitution as by law eftablifhed," for the Government was themfelves the Conftitution, fuch as they chofe to make it; and as to the law eftablifhed, if this Bill paffed, it would ftrike at the very root of all former laws eftablifhed for the Liberty of the Subject, and the Freedom of the Prefs and of Speech would be annihilated. He was fully convinced the whole Bill was totally unneceffary, and that the only views of Minifters were to fhelter themfelves under this claufe from refponfibility.

MR. STREET made an obfervation, which was anfwered by Mr. Cowley, and the third refolution being put, was carried by a large majority; the fourth and the following ones being called for immediately, Mr. Hanfon had only time to make a very fhort remark on the obnoxious claufes of the Bill to prevent Seditious Meetings. He particularly infifted on the defpotifm of a hired Juftice being able, without Judge or Jury, to decide on the crime, and inflict the punifhment.

The Wardmote agreed to the refolutions with a great majority, and it was, without comparifon, the moft numerous Meeting that had been held for years.

CHEAP WARD.

November 19, 1795.

AT a meeting of the inhabitants of this Ward, held this day, to take into confideration two Bills, now pending in Parliament, one entitled, "An Act for the Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon;" the other "for preventing Seditious Affemblies, &c.

JOHN BOYDELL, Efq. Alderman, in the Chair,

Refolved, 1ft, That we feel the deepeft concern and indignation at the late daring attempt made on the perfon of his Majefty, and are anxioufly defirous to aid the civil power, in bringing to punifhment the perpetrators of fo atrocious an outrage.

Refolved, 2dly, That this Meeting declare their firm attachment to the principles of the Conftitution as eftablifhed at the Revolution.

Refolved, 3dly, That the Bills now pending in Parliament will, if carried into effect, be deftructive of thofe principles, a direct violation of the Bill of Rights, and, by fubverting the Liberty of the Prefs, and the Freedom of Public Difcuffion, muft tend to alienate the attachment of the people from the Conftitution of the country, and fhake their heretofore acknowledged loyalty to their Sovereign.

Refolved, 4thly, That we cannot but behold with the moft ferious concern the introduction of fuch alarming Bills into Parliament, being fully perfuaded that the exifting laws are, if properly enforced, fully competent to every purpofe of preferving public tranquillity and the fafety of the Conftitution.

Refolved, 5thly, That we hold it to be the indifpenfible duty of the People of Great Britain, immediately to affemble in their refpective diftricts, to exprefs their abhorrence of this attempt to fubvert their deareft rights, and to endeavour, by all legal and conftitutional means, to prevent thefe obnoxious Bills being paffed into laws.

Refolved, That thefe Refolutions be figned by the Chairman, and publifhed in all the Morning and Evening Papers.

JOHN BOYDELL.

Refolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Alderman for his polite attention and impartial conduct in the Chair.

CHEAP WARD.

London, 19th November, 1795.

WE the underſigned Inhabitants of the Ward of Cheap, do declare our ſentiments to be in favour of a Petition to the Honourable Houſe of Commons, praying that they will take ſuch ſteps, for a limited time, as they may deem neceſſary, to prevent Tumultuous and Seditious Meetings.

Jonath. Hayter
Tho. Everett
Jo. Coulthard
Geo. Kerr
Joſ. Peel
John Tunno
P. Cawdron
J. Shaw, Iron-lane
Tho. Darlington
John Pope
Tho. Wilkes
Rob. Crucifix
John Waugh
Rich. Markham
John Green
John Hubbard
John Thornton
William Rees
Rich. Maddocks
W. E. Smith
Bendry and Brook
Fran. Goodchild
John Vincent
Rob. Williamſon
Nath. Nicholls
Tho. Jones
Tho. Scriven
Cha. Weeden
John Elliott
Ja. Fleetwood
Sam. Donaldſon
Ja. Upton
John Maſters
Geo. Baker
Edward Roberts
Tho. Nettleſhipp
Calverley Bewicke
Henry Heyman
H. Heyman, jun.
John Cannon
Tho. Goodall
Ed. Dickenſon
Rich. Gwillym
John Penleaze
Sam. Edwards
Will. Buckler
Jo. Read
Will. Ferguſon
W. Sammon, King's-ſt.
Ellis, 89, Cheapſide
Rich. Price
Edmund Peel
Tho. Martin
Tho. Mitchell
Iſaac Mead
Geo. Derby
D. Betſon
R. Haighton
Joſ. Bradney
Cha. Miller
John Bacon
Will. Lloyd
R. P. Prichard
John Hilton
Adam Chadwick
Ja. Buchanan
Storkes and Blyth
Jaſper Cox
John, Ed. and Ja. Kenworthy
J. Haigh and Co.
John Whitmore
Will. Andrews
Tho. Weatherall
John Hingeſton
John Hinde
Tho. Butterfield
W. Barker
Caſs and Brown
Benj. Starey
Ed. Dickenſon
Ed. Cowley
Will. Salte
Geo. Wiltſhire
W. Marriott
Sam. Hale
Rich. Jackſon
James Hall
Joſ. Weatherley
John Brockway
Ed. Tute
Philip Day
Geo. Tarington
Tho. Ribright
Ebenezer Boarne
Ed. Winwood
Cha. Weſt
Cha. Weſt, jun.
Sam. Clare
Tho. Tooley
W. King
J. Field
Will. Jackſon
Ed. Pryce
Tho. Oldham
Leon. Barnard
Iſaac Wiltſhire
Will. Ellis, 75, Cheapſide
Tho. Peirſon
J. W. Street
John Maſon
Tho. Ellis
Stephen Ellis
Will. Chapman
Geo. Slack
John Slack
Cha. Hankin
Jere. Branſon
Cha. L'Oſte
W. Sadler
Edward Roberts, Bucklerſbury
Rich. Prime
Ed. Lane
W. Amſinck
Tho. Naſh
Benj. Hooper
John Tho. James
Thomas Starey, Queen-ſtreet
Will. Brownſon
Tho. Squire
Tho. Jefferſon
John Ord
Joſeph Wells
J. Wilkinſon, Crown-court
Will. Elſe
Iſaac Railton
Tho. Jackſon
Smith and Scott
Culliford, Rolfe, and Co.
G. Heingelman
W. Ewſter
W. Fiſher
Tho. Marſhall
Rich. Harris
Ed. Gibbens
Will. Thomas
Benj. Pownall
Grant Hewlett
Jacob Briner
Rich. Wood
Geo. Margetts
Rich. Rothwell
John Wilkinſon, Lawrence-lane
Chriſ. Thomas
J. Shaw, King-ſtreet
Joſeph Brown
Tho. Weſtgarth
R. Ware
T. Bodfield
T. J. Taylor
Joſ. Taylor
Sam. Burnett
Cha. Storey
Rich. Smith
Matthew Simpſon
Geo. Harvey
T. Norton
A. Loxley
C. Stangroom
H. Sanders
T. O. Gill
J. Wilſon and Co.

A ſtronger proof cannot be given of the ſenſe of the majority of the Inhabitants of the Ward of Cheap, with reſpect to the meaſures at preſent pending in Parliament, than by referring the Public to the above Signatures.

N. B. If this aſſertion is doubted, we call upon the oppoſite party to produce their ſignatures likewiſe.

THE LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.
TO THE BRITISH PEOPLE.

IN better times, under other circumſtances than thoſe which now menace the land—ſuch calumnies as have been recently thrown out by ſervants of the public againſt this Society, would meet no other regard than ſilent contempt. But when its deareſt liberties are about to be wrenched from our unfortunate country, and the refutation of a miniſterial falſehood may, in a few ſhort days, become liable to the penalties attached to treaſon!—When thoſe baſe arts are employed for the treacherous purpoſe of propping up the moſt deteſtable meaſures ever attempted to be forced on a free Nation, we ſhould deem ourſelves acceſſaries to their perfidy, were we not to expoſe the impoſture.

The Laws—the Proceedings—the objects of this Society, are indeed "notorious;" they have been long certified, and unequivocally declared in open day; and it is too "notorious" to be agreeable to thoſe who derive their exiſtence from, and feed upon the bowels of corruption, that the principles of REFORM upon which this Society has been erected, is cloſely interwoven with the warmeſt affections of every honeſt man in this nation.

This Society then call upon their Country to HEAR and JUDGE between THEM and their ACCUSERS.

They call upon their accuſers to ſubſtantiate their charge; to refute or diſprove their

DECLARATIONS.

The London Correſponding Society declare, in the preſence of God and their Country, that the inſinuations and aſſertions of Mr. Pitt, Mr. Windham, Lord Grenville, Lord Mornington, Sir John Scott, Mr. Henry Dundas, and other Lords and Gentlemen, regarding certain books, ſaid to be called "The Duties of Citizens," and "The Duties of Kings," which they have aſſerted to have been publiſhed for this Society, by "Citizen Lee," are totally deſtitute of truth.

They declare, that the only knowledge which they have of ſuch books has been derived from the advertiſements of their titles, and the extracts ſaid to have been made from them publiſhed in the Speeches of the Members of Parliament.

They declare, that thoſe books have never been preſented to, or recommended for the ſanction of this Society, nor any other of a like kind, before or after publication; nor have they, nor any ſuch books, in any ſhape or form, been printed by or for, or with the authority, knowledge, conſent, ſanction, privity, or connivance of this Society.

They declare, that the perſon called "Citizen Lee" never has been, in any reſpect, employed to print any matter or thing for or concerning this Society, nor is he a member thereof.

They

They further declare, that other aſſertions purporting to charge this Society with upholding what are called levelling principles, or maxims inimical to the ſacred right of property, are alike groſsly falſe, and directly contradictory to the opinions, and conſtant and uniform profeſſions and conduct of this Society.

They finally declare, that the following liſt comprehends all and every book or pamphlet, printed for this Society, from its inſtitution to this day.

1. The Duke of Richmond's Letter to Col. Sharman.
2. The State of the National Repreſentation.
3. A Narrative of the Seizure of T. Hardy.
4. A Vindication of the Society.
5. The Quarterly Proceedings and Correſpondence of the Society.
6. The Regulations of the Society.
7. Five Numbers of a periodical Work, called "the Politician."

Upon the truth of theſe declarations, the Society ſtands pledged—and join iſſue with their traducers, whom they call upon and defy to diſprove what is here declared; and what having ſo repeatedly aſſerted, they are bound to maintain, at the hazard of all future pretenſions to confidence or veracity. But men of Britain!—Thoſe who have attempted to enſlave you, can feel no ſenſe of reputation—they will not—they cannot meet this challenge to reſcue their characters, like honeſt, like virtuous men!

Their object was to delude and ſow jealouſies; that profiting by the public weakneſs, they might rivet thoſe chains which they have been long ſecretly forging for the Nation.

JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary.

Committee-Room, Nov. 18.

*** The Publiſhers of Papers throughout the Nation, who feel for the honour and happineſs of their country, and value the ſacred rights of opinion and the Preſs, will give this declaration a place without delay.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

Committee-Room, Nov. 19, 1795.

IN conſequence of a Reſolution of the Committee, that the Petition to the Houſe of Commons ſhall be preſented on Monday next, the 23d inſtant, the General Meeting, that was then to have taken place, is poſtponed till ſome future day, of which due notice will be given in the Morning and Evening Papers. It is particularly requeſted that thoſe Citizens, who have opened their houſes to receive Signatures, will return the Liſts to the Secretary; and alſo, that thoſe who wiſh to ſign the Petition will apply as ſoon as poſſible.

The following Perſons have opened their Houſes to receive Signatures:

Hodgſon's, No. 10, Broadway, Weſtminſter.
Aſhley, No. 6, Fiſher-ſtreet, Red-lion-ſquare, Holborn.
Eaton, No. 74, Newgate-ſtreet.
Smith, Portſmouth-ſtreet, Lincoln's-inn-fields.
Lunam, No. 18, Whitcomb-ſtreet, Charing Croſs.
Lee, Bookſeller, oppoſite Buckingham-ſtreet, Strand.
Ballard, May's-buildings, Bedford court, Covent-garden.
Thelwall, No. 2, Beaufort-buildings, Strand.
Burks, No. 74, Sun-ſtreet, Biſhopſgate-ſtreet.

Cherton,

Chelton, No. 38, Bethnal Green Road.
Bone, No. 8, Weſton-ſtreet, Maze, Southwark,
Rouſe, No. 3, near Meeting-Houſe Walk, Snows-fields, Southwark.
Froſt, No. 16, Pepper-ſtreet, Loman's Pond, Southwark.
Thomas, coal-dealer, Newington Cauſeway.
Morrice, No. 13, Pearl row, near the Magdalen.
B. Peacock, Globe-ſtairs, Rotherhithe.
Roberſhaw, Orange-court, Swallow ſtreet.
Meeſon, No. 8, New-ſtreet, Eaſt-ſtreet, Walworth,
Ridgway, York-ſtreet, St. James's ſquare.
Clayton, No. 66, Maid-lane.
G. Place, No. 6, William-ſtreet, Walcot-place, Lambeth.
Thomas Hartley, No. 4, Proſpect-place, Lambeth.
Page, No. 14, Stangate-ſtreet, Lambeth.
Franklow, Pitt-ſtreet, Black-friar's-road.
Rouſe, ſtay-maker, Colcheſter-ſtreet, Whitechapel.
J. Maxwell's, cheeſemonger, No. 39, Broad-ſtreet, Bloomſbury.
And at the Telegraph Office, Fleet-ſtreet.

The neceſſity of an immediate Circulation of the Proceedings of the Society has conſiderably narrowed their Funds. The Friends of their Country, and thoſe who wiſh to promote general information, will forward that object, by ſuch Subſcriptions as they may think proper to leave at any of the above places.

J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

MAIDSTONE MEETING.

AT a Meeting, conſiſting of 500 of the Inhabitants of the town and vicinity of Maidſtone, aſſembled November 18, 1795, agreeable to public advertiſement, at the Star Inn,

Mr. JAMES SMYTH in the Chair,

The following Reſolutions were unanimouſly agreed to:

I. That we contemplate with abhorrence the late daring attack on the perſon of his Majeſty, in his paſſage to and from Parliament, and approve of the means adopted to diſcover and bring to juſtice the perpetrators of that unwarrantable outrage.

II. That we are alarmed at the conduct of Adminiſtration, who have made that diſgraceful circumſtance (which every friend to order muſt reprobate) a pretext for invading the deareſt rights of the people.

III. That the right of aſſembling peaceably together for the free diſcuſſion of public meaſures, and petitioning for the redreſs of grievances, is recognized and guaranteed by the Bill of Rights, which Bill the Government and the People are equally bound to maintain.

IV. That a zealous attachment to the principles of liberty, tranſmitted to us by our anceſtors, and a firm determination to maintain them, is not incompatible with a due reſpect for the perſon and conſtitutional prerogatives of the Sovereign.

V. That an humble Petition be preſented to the Houſe of Commons, praying that Honourable Houſe to reject, as ſubverſive of the fundamental principles of the Conſtitution, the Bills now pending, intituled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, againſt

against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies.

VI. That the said Petition be presented to the Honourable House of Commons, by Clement Taylor, Esq. the worthy and independent Representative of the borough of Maidstone.

VII. That the discontents which unhappily prevail in this country ought not to be attributed to any alienation of the people from the genuine principles of the Constitution as established at the glorious Revolution, but to the distress and calamity brought on them by the present destructive war; and that we can only look to the return of peace for internal tranquillity and happiness.

VIII. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the members of both Houses of Parliament, who have so ably opposed the unconstitutional measures of Administration.

IX. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his able, manly, and upright conduct.

X. That the above Resolutions, signed by the Chairman, be inserted in the Maidstone, Canterbury, and London Papers.

JAMES SMYTH, Chairman.

TOWER HAMLETS ASSOCIATION,

Court-house, Osborn-street, Nov. 20.

AT a Meeting of the Committee,

JOHN PERRY, Esq. in the Chair.

This meeting being convened for the purpose of taking into consideration a Loyal Address to his Majesty, from such inhabitants of the metropolis and parts adjacents as shall sign their names thereto, recommended by the Committee of the Association for preserving Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, and transmitted to the Chairman of this Association. The said Address, together with the Resolutions of the last mentioned Committee, at a Meeting on the 10th instant, were read.

Resolved, That this Committee do entirely approve of and will subscribe their names to the above-mentioned Address.

Resolved also, That this Committee do consider it essential, as well to the secure and permanent exercise of social liberty, as to the enjoyment of common comforts of life by all ranks of people, that such measures as shall be approved by the Parliament of this kingdom should be adopted, as are likely to prevent seditious meetings and publications which have of late been so common.

Resolved therefore, That it be recommended by this Committee, to all the members of this Association, to peruse the said Address, in anxious hopes that it will meet with their approbation, and that they will subscribe their names thereto.

Resolved, That a copy of such Address be left at this place until four o'clock on Wednesday next, and that others be sent to each of the parishes and hamlets in this division, for perusal and signature, and that the same be returned to this place by that time.

Resolved unanimously, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to John Perry, Esq. for his upright, firm, and impartial conduct as Chairman of this Committee.

Resolved,

Resolved, That Mr. Greene, the Secretary, be requested to cause these Resolutions to be inserted in the public Papers.

Adjourned to Thursday next, at eleven o'clock, at this place.

AT a public Meeting of the Inhabitants of GREAT YARMOUTH, held at the Angel Inn, the 19th of November, 1795,

SAMUEL HURRY, Esq. in the Chair,

Resolved, 1st, That, whilst we have observed with the most decided disapprobation the late tumultuary outrage upon the person of his Majesty, we have observed with alarm the introduction of two Bills into Parliament, the one entitled, "An Act for the Safety of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable Practices and Attempts," and the other, "An Act to prevent Seditious Assemblies," which, if they pass into laws, will, in our apprehension, destroy the most valuable privileges of Englishmen, and the latter of which, in particular, we conceive, tends grievously to infringe upon our Right of Petitioning the several branches of the Legislature, as having for its direct object, the total suppression of all public discussion, and of every formal declaration of popular opinion, in any the most peaceable and orderly assembly, unless conformable to the will of the local magistrate, for the time being; every such magistrate being, according to that Bill, to be armed with a perfectly arbitrary power of judging concerning intention, and of summary arrest.

Resolved, 2dly, That we are bound in duty, equally to ourselves and to posterity, to petition Parliament, that these Bills may never pass into laws.

Resolved, 3dly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be presented to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, and the different members of both Houses of Parliament, who have, with so laudable an attention to the rights of the people, stood forth in the DETERMINED opposition of them.

Resolved, 4thly, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Chairman.

SAMUEL HURRY, Chairman.

CONVENTION BILL.

AT a numerous united Meeting of the journeymen of the respective branches of cordwainers, taylors, hatters, curriers, weavers, carpenters, stationers, smiths, bookbinders, printers, &c. of the cities of London, Westminster, and borough of Southwark, held at the One Tun, in the Strand, on Wednesday the 18th day of November, 1795, it was unanimously agreed to present a Petition to the Commons House of Parliament, praying their objection to the present Bills, now pending before their Honourable House, viz. "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," and "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against Treasonable Practices and Attempts." A Petition was therefore presented, and agreed to *nem. con.*

The above Petition was therefore ordered to be engrossed, and is now lying, for the reception of signatures, at the Three Herrings, Bell-yard, Temple-Bar; Swan's Nest, Swan-alley, Coleman-street; Crown, Cranbourn-

bourn-paſſage; Bunch of Grapes, Peter's-ſtreet, Soho; Duke of Cumberland, Terrace, Oxford-ſtreet; King's Arms, Little George-ſtreet, Weſtminſter; Hole in the Wall, Fleet-ſtreet; Porcupine, Great Newport-ſtreet; George, Little Drury-lane; Star, Great Turnſtile, Lincoln's-inn-fields; King's Arms, King's-ſtreet, Borough; Three Horſe Shoes, James-ſtreet, Groſvenor-ſquare; Nag's Head, St. John's-ſtreet, Weſt Smithfield; D. I. Eaton's, Newgate-ſtreet.

At the above Meeting, it was unanimouſly reſolved, That all ſuch journeymen, mechanics, and others, who may not have had an opportunity of attending the ſaid meeting perſonally, or of being repreſented by their delegates, be moſt earneſtly requeſted to ſtep forward in this univerſal cauſe, and ſanction the Petition with their ſignatures againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament, which, if paſſed into a law, will not only deſtroy the ſocial intercourſe of ſociety, but that palladium of Britiſh freedom, the Liberty of the Preſs.

By order of the Meeting,

T. CAVENAGH,
J. HUNTER,
J. ROACH,
G. JERMAN,
N. SIDE, } Executive Committee.

T. RASTALL, Secretary.

N. B. The Petition will receive ſignatures till Monday next.

CONVENTION BILL.

THE gunmakers reſiding in the cities of London and Weſtminſter, and the parts adjacent, are particularly requeſted to meet at the One Tun, Coventry-court, Haymarket; at the Bell, Poppins-court, Fleet-ſtreet, and at the Swan, Manſell-ſtreet, Goodman's Fields, this day, to conſider the propriety of petitioning the Houſe of Commons againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament, by which our liberties as Engliſhmen are threatened with total extinction.

N. B. The Petition will lie for ſignatures, at the above-mentioned places, till eight o'clock this evening.

FREEMEN OF LEICESTER.

AT a Meeting of the freemen of Leiceſter, who ſupported the intereſt of Mr. Parkyns, convened by public advertiſement, at the Paul's Head, Cateaton-ſtreet, the following Reſolutions paſſed unanimouſly.

Reſolved, That the Bills now under conſideration of Parliament are a direct violation of the Bill of Rights, and ſubverſive of the Conſtitution.

Reſolved, That it is the reſolution of this Meeting to inſtruct Mr Parkyns, our Repreſentative, to oppoſe theſe Bills, and do all in his power to prevent their paſſing into laws; and that a Committee be appointed to wait upon him for this purpoſe, and to remind him of his avowed principles to oppoſe Mr. Pitt's improper meaſures. We conceive he cannot juſtify himſelf to his conſtituents, unleſs he exerts himſelf to the utmoſt, to prevent the conſtitutional privilege of petitioning from being ſnatched from us, and our liberties from being overthrown.

MR. DALLEY in the Chair.

November 18, 1795.

T.

To the Worſhipful STEPHEN LANGSTON, Eſq. Alderman of the Ward of Bread-ſtreet.

WE, the underſigned Inhabitants of this Ward, requeſt you will convene a Meeting of the Inhabitants as ſoon as conveniently may be, to take into conſideration the alarming tendency of two Bills now pending in Parliament, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of His Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings;" and to conſider the propriety of preſenting a Petition to the Commons Houſe of Parliament, to prevent ſuch Bills being paſſed into laws.

Signed by 44 Inhabitants.

In conſequence of the above requiſition, I do appoint a Meeting on Monday next, the 23d inſtant, November, 1795, at Cordwainers-Hall, Diſtaff-lane, at Eleven o'clock.

S. LANGSTON.

Tueſday laſt, an Addreſs was read by Commiſſioner PROBY, at his office in Chatham dock-yard, to all claſſes of workmen of that dock-yard, intended to be ſent to his Majeſty, congratulating him on his late eſcape from aſſaſſination, and to be ſigned by all belonging to the yard; but from ſome cauſe, the greateſt part of the above workmen, in number about 1100 or 1200, aſſembled on Wedneſday morning in the rope-houſe and refuſed ſigning it. The Commiſſioner, and other Officers of the yard, acquainted them, there was no occaſion for them to act contrary to their inclination, but wiſhed them to go to their reſpective duties, which they did not; and in the afternoon nearly the whole abſented themſelves, and went to Rocheſter, to ſign the Petition againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, NOV. 20.

PETITIONS AGAINST THE TWO BILLS.

MR. HONEYWOOD preſented a Petition from the Mayor, Recorder, Freemen, and Inhabitants of the City of Rocheſter, againſt the Bills pending in Parliament, "for the Security of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and for the more effectual Prevention of Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies."

A Petition of the three under-ſigned, the Mayor, Recorder, Freemen, and Inhabitants of the City of Rocheſter, and parts adjacent, was preſented to the Houſe, and read; ſetting forth, "that by ſundry proviſions in a Bill now before the Houſe, intituled, "A Bill for the Safety of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," the petitioners obſerve, with grief, that the ancient and wholeſome ſtatute of

of treaſons of the 25th of Edward III. is altered, and new treaſons enacted: That, whenever, by the bad adminiſtration of Government, or their own imprudence, Parliaments have been induced to depart from this plain and clear declaration of treaſons, and to alter the general law reſpecting them, as there ſet forth; our forefathers have always returned to it, with increaſed conviction of its certainty and ſufficiency for the protection, as well of the perſon and prerogative of the King as of the liberties of the people: That, by other proviſions of the ſaid Bill, the crime of ſedition is uncertainly defined, and a new and harſher puniſhment, in imitation of the ſevere and arbitrary Scots law, introduced for it: That, by the proviſions in a Bill now alſo before the Houſe, purporting to be "for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," the Petitioners conceive a violent and dangerous attack is made on the undoubted right of the people to petition the King or Parliament for redreſs of their grievances, by ſubjecting the meetings neceſſary for the conſideration of ſuch grievances, and framing ſuch petitions, to new and inconvenient regulations, guarded by ſevere penalties, and unknown to our anceſtors and to the laws of the land; alſo by giving vague and diſcretionary powers to magiſtrates for the moſt part appointed by the Crown, and removeable at its pleaſure, to prevent any diſcuſſion at their will, to diſſolve ſuch meetings, and to impriſon thoſe who may be preſent there: That, in both the ſaid Bills a latitude of expreſſion is uſed in defining the acts conſtituting the crime of Sedition, which may be made to include every notice of public meaſures, other than approbationary, and is therefore utterly ſubverſive of the freedom of the pen, of the preſs, and of ſpeech: That, though the late deteſtable outrage againſt the Royal Perſon has been uſed as a pretence for theſe innovations, yet the Petitioners cannot help obſerving, that the force of the laws does not appear to them to have been adequately reſorted to, nor the civil power to have been duly exerted at the time, and that it is unfair to conclude from thence, that thoſe powers, when properly exerted, are inſufficient: That the Petitioners are ſatisfied, from the experience of ages, and eſpecially from that of the paſt century, during part of which a great and alarming diſaffection pervaded all ranks of people, which extended not only to the King's Government, but to his title and perſon, and excited two formidable rebellions in the heart of the realm; that the preſent laws, duly and vigorouſly adminiſtered, are fully adequate to the puniſhment of treaſon and ſedition, as well as to the keeping of the peace, and the protection of his Majeſty's perſon; and the Petitioners declare their readineſs, in their ſeveral capacities

ties, to enforce them for thofe purpofes to the utmoft of their power: That the people of this country, being in general undoubtedly loyal to his Majefty, and well affected to the Conftitution, ought not, collectively, to fuffer an abridgment of their rights and liberties for the act, however atrocious, of a few defperate and obfcure individuals: That the effect of thefe Bills will be to deftroy all freedom of complaint againft oppreffions of Laws or Government, however well founded; to annihilate, in fubftance, the fifth article of the Declaration of Rights; and to create, in confequence, the moft alarming difcontents among his Majefty's fubjects: The Petitioners therefore intreat the Houfe, as they wifh to tranfmit to their pofterity the unimpaired liberties of their anceftors, to preferve in the people their reverence for the Conftitution, and to merit their refpect as faithful guardians of their rights, to refift all attempts, under whatever pretences, to abridge their liberties, and efpecially not to pafs the faid Bills.

Mr. Honeywood faid, before he made the ufual motion for laying the Petition upon the table, he fhould trouble the Houfe with a few words. It might, perhaps, appear extraordinary that he fhould prefent the prefent Petition; the fact was, that he prefented it at the particular requeft of the Petitioners; not that they were not fenfible of there being other Members of much greater abilities than himfelf; but that they knew his fentiments coincided with thofe expreffed in the Petition. It was therefore with peculiar fatisfaction that he had that day an opportunity of declaring thofe fentiments, and of expreffing the great fatisfaction with which he difcharged the truft repofed in him. The Petition which the Houfe had juft heard was couched in terms of becoming refpect. It had been procured by no artifice or manœuvre, but was dictated by a genuine fpirit of loyalty and independence. The perfons by whom it was figned he well knew to be well affected to Government, and to be particularly partial to the Monarchical Branch of the Conftitution. From local circumftances, the Petitioners might be fuppofed to have an intereft in fupporting Adminiftration; they refided near Chatham, and there were many advantages which they derived from that circumftance in an honourable manner, but which might, in the contemplation of fome, be fuppofed to give them a bias in favour of the meafures of Adminiftration. Notwithftanding all confiderations of intereft, they had neverthelefs fairly and firmly come forward like friends to their country, and apprehending danger from the Bill, had expreffed their fentiments freely, and given it their moft decided difapprobation. He confeffed, he felt himfelf to be an incompetent advocate; but, thank God! the Petition wanted no advo-

cate.

cate. During a period of twenty years that he had sat in Parliament, he hoped he had done his duty; he had always acted according to the dictates of his conscience, and so he should continue to act. From a sense of his duty he was impelled to consider these Bills, not only as a flagrant outrage upon the rights of the people, but as a measure repugnant to every principle of justice. Where was the necessity, he would ask, of punishing the whole people of England for the crime or madness of a few individuals? Where was the policy of persevering in coercing and coercing? Mr. Honeywood said, Administration should recollect, that there was no living thing so tame that would not turn again, if goaded to a certain point. The present policy, was, in his opinion, decidedly bad, and loaded the penal code with new and additional severities. A system of severity was ill calculated to quiet popular complaint. The Petitioners, on the present occasion, were men who had been once most attached to the present Minister, nay, he had ever thought them too much prejudiced in his favour. They were attached to him from the pledges which he had given in the early part of his political career; and they had in the commencement of his Administration given him their decided support; but they had since seen all those pledges forgotten and abandoned. When the Right Honourable Gentleman first came into office, he had stood candidate for the county he represented, together with a Noble Lord now a Member of the other House of Parliament, and the electors had required, as a pledge of their future conduct, that they should declare that they would support the Constitution by voting for the measures of the Right Honourable Gentleman; at that time they considered the Minister as the friend of the people, a reformer of abuses, and an enemy to corruption. Could it therefore be matter of wonder that they had withdrawn that confidence, when they saw the system of measures which he pursued, and viewed these Bills by which the liberties of the people were to be annihilated? Was it surprising that their opinion should be changed, when they saw the Right Honourable Gentlemen, who had declaimed with such eloquence upon the abuses of the Government, persist in maintaining them; when they saw him abandon every former profession, and relinquish that conduct which had gained him their attachment and support? The present laws were, he said, perfectly sufficient for securing the safety of the King and the Constitution. If Government, instead of enacting severe laws, which outraged the principles of the Constitution and the feelings of the people, would redress their grievances, they would more conciliate that love. Mr. Honeywood concluded with saying, that from

from the character of the men who figned it, the Petition had great weight, and he hoped it would be confidered by the Houfe with that attention which might induce them to reject the pernicious meafures againft which it remonftrated.

The Petition was ordered to lie on the table.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY MEETING.

Saturday, Nov. 21, 1795.

PURSUANT to the appointment of the Sheriff of the county of Middlefex, the Freeholders of the county met for the purpofe of taking into confideration a Petition to the Houfe of Commons againft the two Bills which are depending in that Houfe; the one called "A Bill for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government;" and the other, "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies."

At 11 o'clock the great Affembly-room of the Mermaid, at Hackney, was crouded; the Sheriffs took the Chair, and opened the bufinefs of the Meeting, but the company became fo numerous in lefs than half an hour afterwards, that the room could not contain a third of them. It was therefore propofed, and the Sheriffs immediately confented, that the proceedings fhould be carried on in the open air upon the green adjoining the houfe. Here then began, properly fpeaking, the bufinefs of the day, in the prefence of, perhaps, two thoufand Electors of the firft county in the kingdom, for talents, for information, and for wealth.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK came forward, and was received with that refpect and veneration which the appearance of fuch a character in a popular affembly deferves.

The noble Duke faid, it was needlefs for him to make any preface to what he was going to propofe to the Meeting; for he knew there would be no objection to it. He then propofed an Addrefs to the King, congratulating him on his happy efcape from the late attack upon his perfon, and expreffing the abhorrence of the Meeting at that atrocious outrage, &c.

This Addrefs being feconded by Mr. Alderman Skinner, was carried unanimoufly.

THE SHERIFFS then defired thofe who were not Freeholders of the county, if there were any fuch prefent, not to take any fhare in the proceedings.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK then obferved to the company, that the object for which they were called together was well known to them, and was of the greateft importance to the people of this land, and to their pofterity; the Meeting would therefore give it their moft ferious attention. In the courfe of a life which, for thirty years together, was much devoted to the confideration of public affairs, as a Member of both Houfes of Parliament he might fay he had gained fome experience; he had alfo, in that time, attended many County Meetings; but nothing had occurred in all that time that equalled in importance the bufinefs of this day.

The present Meeting had been called by persons of considerable connection with, and interest in, the county, and resident in it; as for himself he could hardly, in strictness, say, he was much of a Freeholder of the county of Middlesex, for he only had a house in Westminster, and therefore he felt himself liable to a charge of presumption for being the first to call the attention of the company to a business of this importance, and to call upon them to adopt measures which he was now about to do. It was well known to them all, that a Meeting was called, and opened by a person of considerable property and weight (the Duke of Bedford) at Westminster. With the result of that Meeting the company was well acquainted. It was his wish, the noble Duke said, that the Duke of Northumberland had attended to-day, and opened the business of the present Meeting; "he would have been a much fitter person than myself, (said the noble Duke) but I have his full authority to say, he is convinced of the propriety of the measure which I am about to propose to you. He has directed me to say to you, that it is his ill health only that prevents him from being here, and he laments it very much."

It might be asked why persons of the description he alluded to were so ready upon this occasion to come forward in Popular Meetings. To which he would answer distinctly, that it had been industriously propagated, that all Meetings of this kind were called together by persons of evil designs against the Constitution of this country. He did not say that there were, or that there were not, such Meetings held; but that opinion having gone abroad, some persons had endeavoured to blind the public altogether, and to regard alike with jealousy and disapprobation, every measure which was proposed to the people out of Parliament. To this sort of doctrine there were respectable names; and this they called a well-grounded fear, that property and rank were in danger, and that therefore no person of consideration would come forward upon any such occasion as this. Seeing it in that point of view—seeing what effect such doctrine might have upon the public mind; and seeing, above all, that if ever there was a moment when a man of property and rank, and the power which attends them, should come forward for the public interest, this was the moment. He thought it necessary to come forward to avow his opinion. He therefore hoped that he should not be deemed presuming too much when he offered his sentiments to so respectable a part of the public as he now addressed. "But, Gentlemen," said the noble Duke, "it is not the satisfaction, the comfort which I can derive from any property I possess: it is not the pride that I might have on account of any hereditary rank that I am come here to shew for; I declare, it comes with more satisfaction to my heart than any thing else can do, that I can here address my countrymen as an Englishman! Calling you my Brother-freeholders and Fellow-citizens! [Here the whole Assembly burst into acclamations of applause.] Yes, my Fellow citizens, I say, for I shall repeat that word, notwithstanding the modern attempts that have been made to treat it with contempt, we are here come forward to guard our well-known established rights, which have lately been invaded, and endeavoured to be overthrown!—For that most wicked purpose, two Bills have been brought into Parliament; the one called, 'A Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government; the other, 'A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies.' If

If these Bills were to aim at nothing more than their titles import, we should be all ready to assent to them; but it is not to the title of a thing that we are to look, we should examine the contents, that is the way to form a judgment of its nature. We must not suffer ourselves to be deprived of our freedom by Bills that are brought forward under specious names. I dare say, if the High Priest of the Spanish Inquisition was to come among us to introduce his system of Inquisition here, he would call it "An Act for the better Support and Protection of Religion!" But we have understandings that are not to be deceived in this way, and we will defend our rights. I have, and am sure of it, as much desire to defend every branch of our Constitution, as the author of these Bills has. I know I am doing my duty to my country by opposing them in this manner. Happy it is for us, that the Liberty of the Press tells us daily, who are doing good and who are doing evil. If these Bills should pass into law, you will lose the Liberty of the Press; you will lose the Freedom of Speech; indeed, you will have no Freedom; you will be entirely at the mercy of any corrupt magistrate, who may be appointed by a corrupt Minister. You will have a political inquisition to fetter and enslave you, in politics, as is now done in Spain, under the pretext of religion. Suppose a man was addressing a number of Spaniards, and the Priest stood by him, and did not approve of his discourse, the Priest would say, 'This is heterodox,' away to the Inquisition would the author go. Apply that to this Bill against Meetings. If any man should utter that which a venal, wicked justice should say was constitutionally wrong, the business of the Meeting must stop immediately; and if you oppose this justice, you are all made felons. If I was to enter into a discussion of these Bills at length, I should take up more of your time than I conceive I have a right to do. You know the principle on which they are founded, and therefore I should now conclude with proposing to you a Petition to be presented to the House of Commons against these Bills, but that I think I ought to remind you of the Bill of Rights, the history of which is well known to you."

[Here the noble Duke read that part of the Bill of Rights which relates to the right of Petitioning, to which the company with a shout of applause testified their attachment] He then concluded—

"Thus saith the Bill of Rights, for which your ancestors shed their blood, and for which, if it should ever become necessary, every Englishman will, I hope, be ready to shed his. If the Bill, which is now in Parliament should pass into a law, I put it to you whether that part which I have read to you of the Bill of Rights will not be repealed."

This speech was applauded so much, that a considerable time elapsed before the noble Duke himself could be heard to say, "This is the Petition which I propose to you to be presented to the House of Commons against the Bills that are there now depending."

The Petition being read and proposed to the Company,

Mr. Alderman Skinner seconded the motion for the Electors of Middlesex adopting it as their Petition, in a short, but very neat and forcible speech. While he was speaking, a small number of a troop of Horse appeared at the entrance of the Green. The company expressed great indignation at their appearance, and the Sheriffs ordered them to withdraw instantly, which they did. The worthy Alderman then assigned his reasons for

f r oppoſing the Bills now in Parliament. He thought they tended to add prodigiouſly to the power of the Crown, and to give to magiſtrates a power which ought not to be put into the hands of any man upon earth. He profeſſed great attachment to his Majeſty; but he ſaw the Bills now in queſtion in a very different light from that of giving ſecurity to his perſon. They appeared to him to be Bills againſt any exerciſe of public Rights of Debate and Petition among the people, and therefore he approved highly of the preſent Petition.

The company expreſſed their eſteem of him by loud approbation.

The Sheriffs then informed the company they had received a letter from the Marquis of Lanſdowne, which was propoſed to be read.

This was oppoſed as an irregular proceeding by Mr. Perry, the naval builder; but after a few words from the Duke of Norfolk the letter was read by deſire of a vaſt majority of the company.

The letter ſtated his Lordſhip's entire approbation of the public oppoſition to the Bills in queſtion.

Mr. Mainwaring then offered himſelf to the attention of the company, but our account of his ſpeech muſt be very imperfect, as we heard him very indiſtinctly, and ſo did the majority of the company, as he himſelf complained that the company were but ill diſpoſed to attend to him.

He obſerved, among other things, that he came there rather to receive the inſtruction of his conſtituents, than to deliver much of his own opinion upon the Bills in Parliament. He had heard that an opinion had gone abroad that he had ſome ſhare in recommending the bringing forward of the preſent meaſures on the part of Government. He diſavowed this. He knew nothing of them until they were brought forward. With regard to the Bill againſt Public Meetings, he ſhould vote againſt it totally, unleſs two of its clauſes were expunged. But he thought it might be modified in other reſpects—[Here the company ſaid, No! No! no modification of ſuch a Bill.]

Mr. Byng then came forward and was very cordially received. He came forward, he ſaid, as one of the Freeholders of the county of Middleſex to join the noble Duke and the worthy Alderman who had preceded him. He abhorred, as they all did, the late outrage on his Majeſty. But while they had that feeling, they could not forget the principles of our Conſtitution. He could not forget the duty that he owed to the people of this county. He would ſay then, that if theſe Bills be ſuffered to be paſſed into law, they will give the death-blow to the Conſtitution of this land.

We had hitherto obſerved that every thing ſaid againſt unequal taxation, every thing ſaid againſt this unjuſt war, was endeavoured to be ſilenced. If, therefore, public freedom and open diſcuſſion be denied us: if this beſt and deareſt of our rights, the right of diſcuſſion, be denied us, or rather be ſurrendered by us, nothing will be left to Engliſhmen but to ſuffer every evil without even daring to complain. Then indeed might Britons be compared to the ſubjects of all the deſpots on the Continent; for they have juſtice adminiſtered to them, in other reſpects as we have. They enjoy the fruits of their labour as we do: they dare do any thing but complain of the conduct of their oppreſſors. If theſe Bills paſſed into a law, they would place a power in the hands of the Miniſter, which never ought to be in the hands of any human being. A power which ought not to be enjoyed by any man in a free ſtate. Beſides, this power might be put into the hands of thoſe who love

love not the principles of our Conſtitution, who aim at nothing but their own aggrandizement; who purſue their object by baſe and ſordid means; who may not only oppreſs the people at large, but who may aim at the lives of thoſe who oppoſed them moſt, and endeavour to cut them off by the evidence of Spies and Informers; and for that purpoſe might prefer againſt them falſe charges of High Treaſon. If ſuch power was to be truſted to ſuch men, then this once free and happy iſland will become the ſink of deſpotiſm and ſlavery; and ultimately go into that very anarchy and confuſion which ſome perſons now affect to dread. To avert ſuch calamity, he was ſure the company would join with him—Firſt, in repelling an invaſion of our Conſtitution, from whatever quarter that invaſion came, that we may enjoy its bleſſings. Secondly, to regard it as a ſacred inheritance, which our anceſtors bought with their beſt blood, and gave to us to be tranſmitted to our poſterity unimpaired. He hoped that from his conduct in Parliament he had proved his attachment to theſe principles. "I hope," ſaid he, "I have your approbation for my conduct; my conſcience tells me I am deſerving of it. The whole object of my life is to preſerve for the people the principles of our Conſtitution whole and entire."—This ſpeech was very highly applauded.

Mr. Perry, the Builder, profeſſed his diſqualifications for ſpeaking in public. But his excuſe was, that men of the middle claſs of life, and moderate abilities, in which he included himſelf, were generally the beſt judges of public meaſures, for they had not that ſort of party prejudice which men of high rank, large fortune, and ſplendid talents, too commonly have.

The preſent Petition ſtated that the laws of our anceſtors had been found ſufficient to ſuppreſs treaſon, but did our anceſtors ever ſee the ſtrides which anarchy was now making, and the miſery which it was bringing along with it? Had we not ſeen a diſpoſition in ſome perſons to give lectures upon political ſubjects, and had we not known of the publication of ſeditious pamphlets? It was clear that there muſt be ſome remedy found for this miſchief: it was, in his mind, eſſential to a ſecurity for the enjoyment of ſocial liberty and the common comforts of this life, that the Bills now depending in Parliament ſhould paſs; he declared his diſapprobation of the Petition, and his entire approbation of the Bills now before Parliament.

The company appeared to be diſpleaſed with the ſentiments of this gentleman, and convinced him that he had exhauſted their patience.

The Duke of Bedford then came forward amidſt the ſhouts of applauſe of the whole company. He ſaid he was called upon by the ſpeech the company had juſt heard. That gentleman had ſeemed to be ſurpriſed that the company was not pleaſed with his ſpeech when they put an end to it. The Noble Duke ſaid, he was almoſt ſorry the company did ſo; for if they had ſuffered that gentleman to go on, they would have heard ſome extraordinary doctrine. Was that gentleman of the deſcription which he gave in his ſpeech, uninfluenced by party conſiderations? Whether he was or not, he ſhould take no further pains to enquire. "I am," ſaid the Duke, "attached to a party, and I am not aſhamed of avowing it; and I ſhall be attached to that party as long as, but no longer, than they are advocates for the liberties of their countrymen. That Gentleman," ſaid the Noble Duke, alluding to ſomething that was ſaid in the room when the buſineſs was opened, "ſeemed to inſinuate that we were not ſerious in our profeſſions to the King:—I do not hold myſelf one jot leſs loyal than himſelf. But while

I ſay,

I ſay, I am attached to the King as one of the branches of our form of Government, I, on the other hand, have alſo my attachment to the other parts of our Conſtitution, and from which I know many of its bleſſings are derived. Theſe ſentiments I will avow in defiance of all the attacks that may be made upon me, I think that, in ſupporting this Petition, I am ſtanding forward in ſupport of the King and Conſtitution; as much by this Petition in favour of the Conſtitution, as I ſtood forward, or any man ſtood forward, in voting a loyal Addreſs to the King.

"I confeſs that when I, for one, ſigned the requiſition for holding this Meeting, I was ſo alarmed for the Conſtitution altogether, that I did not think, at that moment, of an Addreſs to the King. I ſigned this requiſition to take the ſenſe of the Freeholders of the County of Middleſex on the conduct of what appears to me to be a deſpotic Adminiſtration. Men who from the daring attack they have made on the liberties of the people, I ſhould think, would not, if they had the opportunity, be very delicate in trampling on the Sovereign himſelf.

"You obſerved the ſoldiers that ſurrounded you juſt now. You all feel gratitude to your Sheriffs for ordering them to withdraw. But if theſe Bills had paſſed, and we had here a corrupt magiſtrate, (and ſorry I am to ſay there are many ſuch), even what I have ſaid againſt them might have been ſaid to be an attack on the Conſtitution. You are at preſent free to deliberate, but if theſe Bills had paſſed, you might now have been ſubject to military execution. I have only to tell you, that you are at preſent ſanctioned by the Bill of Rights which was framed by your anceſtors, and thoſe who, according to the principles of that Bill, transferred the Throne to the Family that now ſit on it: you never had greater occaſion to exerciſe your rights. You could not, perhaps, have ſuppoſed that any Miniſter would have dared to attack you thus; and I do not wonder at your indignation. I call upon you to exerciſe your rights with calmneſs, but to exerciſe them firmly, decidedly, and forcibly; and I truſt that the Miniſter will perceive that he is attacking the Conſtitution againſt the will of the people, and that, daring even as he is, he muſt give up his project."

The company teſtified their approbation of this ſpeech by very animated applauſe.

The Petition was then agreed to, by the whole company holding up their hands for it, except Mr. Perry and about ſix others.

Sir Joseph Mawbey ſaid, that as Mr. Mainwaring wanted inſtructions upon this buſineſs, his Conſtituents might as well now inſtruct him:—We might as well live in Turkey as in England if theſe Bills were to paſs. Gentlemen talked about anarchy.—Why anarchy itſelf was better than ſuch laws as theſe. Anarchy, from its nature, muſt be of ſhort duration; and he had rather ſee many days of anarchy than ages of deſpotiſm. He therefore moved, "that Mr. Mainwaring and Mr. Byng the Members for this County, be inſtructed to oppoſe theſe Bills in all their ſtages."—Carried with great applauſe.

Mr. Church, after a ſhort ſpeech, moved the Thanks to Mr. Byng for his Parliamentary conduct in general, and particularly for his conſtitutional oppoſition to the preſent Bills.

The Duke of Norfolk inclined to doubt the decorum and delicacy of thanking excluſively one Member for the county, while the other was preſent.

fent. The company, however, very ſhortly overcame the punctilio, and voted the Thanks to Mr. Byng with acclamation.

The Thanks of the Meeting were then unanimouſly given to the Sheriffs for their conduct, on the motion of Mr. Alderman Combe.

The company departed in the moſt orderly and peaceable manner, the inſtant that intimation was given by the Sheriff.

MIDDLESEX.

AT a numerous Meeting of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of this county, convened by the Sheriff, and held this day at the Mermaid Tavern, at Hackney, in the ſaid county, in conſequence of a Requiſition, an Addreſs to his Majeſty, congratulating him on his eſcape from the late daring outrage, was propoſed by his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, ſeconded by Mr. Alderman Skinner, and unanimouſly agreed to.

The Duke of Norfolk then moved, and Mr. Alderman Skinner ſeconded, a Petition to the Houſe of Commons againſt the two Bills ſeverally entitled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," and "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," which on a ſhew of hands was carried in the affirmative by a very great majority. Whereupon it was Reſolved,

That the Sheriff be requeſted forthwith to preſent the ſaid Addreſs to his Majeſty.

That Wm. Mainwaring, Eſq. and George Byng, Eſq. the Repreſentatives in Parliament for this county, be requeſted to preſent the ſaid Petition to the Honourable Houſe of Commons.

That this Meeting do inſtruct the Repreſentatives in Parliament for this county, to oppoſe the two Bills mentioned in the Petition, in every ſtage of their progreſs through the Houſe of Commons.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to George Byng, Eſq. for his general conduct in Parliament, and particularly for his conſtitutional oppoſition to the ſaid Bills.

That an account of the proceedings of this Meeting be ſigned by the Sheriff, and inſerted in the newſpapers.

Nov. 21, 1795. RICHARD GLODE, JOHN LIPTRAP, } Sheriff.

It was then unanimouſly Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Richard Sir Glode, Knight, and John Liptrap, Eſq. Sheriff of this county, for the alacrity with which they complied with the Requiſition for this Public Meeting, for their upright and impartial conduct during the whole of the proceedings, and particularly for their prompt and conſtitutional interference in ordering the military to withdraw.

SURRY.

THE Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and reſpectable Inhabitants of this county, who may think it expedient that his Majeſty, the two Houſes of Parliament, and the Kingdom at large, ſhould be truly informed of their ſentiments on certain Great Public Queſtions now depending, and who conſider the true ſenſe of the county as having been over-ruled at the

Meeting at Epſom, on Friday laſt, by a number of perſons in no wiſe entitled to be preſent at ſuch Meeting, are reſpectfully informed, That an humble Addreſs to his Majeſty, expreſſing the reliance of this county on his Majeſty's gracious declaration in Parliament, that he will be ready to enter into negociations for peace, upon ſuch terms as may conſiſt with the ſecurity and happineſs of his people; and further expreſſing a hope that the wiſdom, the power, and the unanimity of the nation, may become means (under Providence) to accelerate the period when we may hope to enjoy the bleſſings of Peace, without endangering the future ſafety of our glorious Conſtitution.

And alſo,—A Petition to the Houſe of Commons, complaining of the outrages which ſome of the lower claſſes of the people, deluded by the arts of unprincipled men, have been led to commit, and of the danger to which our happy Conſtitution is by ſuch practices expoſed: And further, complaining of thoſe ſchools of ſedition in which the people are ſeduced from their allegiance, and the riſing generation are taught to deſpiſe the religion and laws of their forefathers; alſo expreſſing a hope that the wiſdom of Parliament will be able to provide ſuch laws as may be adequate to reſtrain theſe growing evils, without infringing thoſe liberties which Engliſhmen ought ever to hold dear, amongſt which the Right of Petitioning and of remonſtrating to the ſeveral branches of the Legiſlature, are declared to form an eſſential part.

WHICH SAID ADDREES AND PETITION

Were read, and highly approved at the late public Meeting, but were overruled and prevented from ſtanding, as the avowed ſenſe of the Meeting, by the means before-mentioned; and now lie ready to be ſigned by ſuch of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and reſpectable Inhabitants, as approve thereof, viz.

At the Spread Eagle at Epſom,
At the White Hart at Guildford,
At the Greyhound at Croydon,
At the Sun at Kingſton,
At the White Hart at Reigate,
At the Red Lion at Dorking,
At the Talbot at Richmond,
At the Buſh at Farnham, and
At the Three Tuns Tavern, in Southwark.

The Addreſs and Petition will be preſented on Friday morning next.
Gentlemen are requeſted to add the place of their reſidence to their reſpective names.

E P S O M,

November 20, 1795.

AT a Public Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and other inhabitants of the county of Surry, held this day at Epſom, called by the High Sheriff, purſuant to a requiſition for that purpoſe,

The HIGH SHERIFF in the Chair.

A Petition to his Majeſty, humbly praying that his Majeſty will be graciouſly pleaſed to order proper ſteps to be taken for opening an immediate negotiation for Peace was moved by Mr. Trecothick, ſeconded by Mr Petre,

voted

voted by the majority, and ordered to be presented by Lord William Ruſſell.

A Petition to the Houſe of Commons againſt the paſſing two Bills now before Parliament, the one purporting to be "An Act for the Safety of his Majeſty's Crown and Government, againſt Treaſonable Practices and Attempts," and the other "for preventing Seditious Meetings," was alſo moved by Mr. Trecothick, ſeconded by the Honourable Mr. Petre, voted by a majority, and ordered to be preſented by Lord Wm. Ruſſell.

It was moved by Sir Joſeph Mawbey, Bart. and ſeconded by the Honourable Mr. Petre, and voted that the Thanks of the Meeting be given to Lord William Ruſſell, the worthy Repreſentative in Parliament for this county, for his oppoſition to the preſent ruinous and unneceſſary War, and for his ſteady ſupport of the Rights and Liberties of the People.

By Order of the Meeting,

THOMAS TURTON, Sheriff.

The Sheriff having left the Chair,

The Thanks of the Meeting were moved by the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, and ſeconded by Lord William Ruſſel, to the Sheriff for his able and impartial conduct in the Chair, which motion was carried unanimouſly.

To the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of CAMBRIDGE.

A MEETING being called by the High Sheriff, on Wedneſday the 25th inſt. for the purpoſe of Addreſſing his Majeſty on the late alarming outrage committed on his Perſon in his paſſage to and from Parliament,—it is earneſtly requeſted that every perſon who is an enemy on the one hand to Licentiouſneſs and Tumult, and on the other to the threatened deſtruction of our Liberties, by two Bills now pending in Parliament, for the Extenſion of Treaſons and the Suppreſſion of Public Meetings, will give his attendance on that day; as an Amendment will be propoſed for addreſſing the Sovereign, to refuſe his Aſſent to the ſaid Bills, (ſhould they paſs the two Houſes) and to put a ſpeedy termination to the preſent diſaſtrous War. A Petition to Parliament will likewiſe be propoſed againſt the Bills.

PARISH OF ST. JAMES, WESTMINSTER.

Nov. 21, 1795.

AT a Meeting of ſeveral reſpectable Inhabitants, houſeholders of this pariſh,

HARRY HOUSE, Eſq. in the Chair,

IT WAS RESOLVED,

That a Partial Meeting having been held on Wedneſday the 18th inſt. at a place called the Seſſion Houſe, No. 49, Poland ſtreet:—It is recommended to the inhabitants of this pariſh, to meet their fellow Pariſhioners at Willis's Rooms, in King-ſtreet, St. James's-ſquare, on Tueſday next, the 24th inſt. at twelve o'clock, to take into conſideration the two Bills now pending in Parliament, ſtriking at the vital Liberties of the People, as handed down to them by their forefathers, and eſtabliſhed by the Bill of Rights.

BOROUGH

BOROUGH OF READING,

November 20, 1795.

AT the fulleſt Meeting ever remembered of the town of Reading, the following Petition to the Houſe of Commons was voted by a conſiderable majority:—

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the town of Reading, ſheweth,

That your Petitioners have been in all ages diſtinguiſhed for their attachment to the Crown, and for their regard to the Conſtitution.

That, on the late atrocious attack on the Perſon of his Majeſty, your Petitioners were foremoſt in teſtifying their indignation at the horrid attempt, and their gratitude to the King of Kings for preſerving a life ſo deſervedly dear to every loyal heart.

That, during the preſent Adminiſtration, they have been unanimous, to a degree almoſt unexampled, in adherence to their principles, and in ſupport of their meaſures.

That they unequivocally diſapprove, and will unite their endeavours to check, the promiſcuous and tumultuary meetings of perſons, who are not aſſembled in a civil or political capacity of members of a county, town, or pariſh, ſuch as have lately taken place in the neighbourhood of the metropolis.

That, influenced by theſe ſentiments of loyalty and patriotiſm, your Petitioners view with conſiderable alarm, two Bills introduced into your Honourable Houſe; the firſt intituled, "A Bill for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" the ſecond "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies."

That, in the former, they ſee with the moſt ſerious concern, a revival of thoſe attempts to encreaſe the catalogue of treaſons which were made in former ages by weak and arbitrary Adminiſtrations, with equal danger to the ſafety of the Monarch, and the liberty of the ſubject; but which a wiſer policy conſtantly reſtricted by recurring to the only beneficial ſtatute on that ſubject, a ſtatute ſanctioned by the experience of more than four hundred years—that of the 25th of Edward III.

That your Petitioners conſider the ſecond Bill as ſubverſive of the 5th Article of the Bill of Rights, of that ſolemn compact, made at the Revolution between the King and the People, for the eſtabliſhment of the Religion, Laws, and Liberties of this Country, which acknowledges the Right of Subjects to Petition, in the capacity already deſcribed of members of a county, town, or pariſh, and declares all commitments and proſecutions for ſuch petitioning illegal.

That they conceive the free exerciſe of this privilege to be the ſtrongeſt argument againſt democratic innovators, whoſe theories of Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments would acquire ſome plauſibility, if the voice of the people could be ſuppreſſed at the arbitrary command of two individuals.

That

That in the opinion of your Petitioners, the exifting laws are fufficient to protect the civil and political rights of every branch of the Conftitution; and that if, according to the opinion of a great Law Character, the perfons who were tried for High Treafon had been indicted for Sedition, public order would probably have received a more effectual fecurity.

That, above all, your Petitioners are apprehenfive that the prefent uneafinefs may be traced to a higher caufe than that which is reprefented as productive of public danger.—They therefore humbly implore your Honourable Houfe, as Citizens, as Chriftians, and as Men, to take into the moft ferious confideration the circumftances of a War, which, whatever difference of opinion may exift on its principles, muft be acknowledged to have been ill-conducted in its progrefs, and calamitous in its confequences.

That, conceiving the reftoration of Peace to be better calculated to allay the public difcontents, by difmiffing the public burdens, than the moft coercive regulations, they humbly hope, that your Honourable Houfe will urge the neceffity of treating with the Executive Power of France, under whatever form it may be eftablifhed, on fafe and honourable terms, and particularly, as the more immediate object of this Addrefs, they moft earneftly entreat that the Bills, which they deprecate, may not receive the fanction of your Honourable Houfe.

And your Petitioners fhall ever pray, &c.

SOCIETY OF UNITED PUBLICANS.

AT a numerous and refpectable Meeting of Tavern and Inn-keepers, Coffeehoufe-keepers, and Publicans in general, held on Saturday the 21ft of November, 1795, at the Shakefpeare Tavern, Covent-Garden, to take into confideration the Bills now pending in Parliament, intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies;" and "An Act for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government againft Treafonable Practices and Attempts,"

Mr. JOHN WRIGHT in the Chair.

I. Refolved unanimoufly, That this Meeting is convened folely for the purpofe of confidering the claufes in the above-mentioned Bills, and in no other political view whatever.

II. Refolved unanimoufly, That this Meeting declare their firm attachment to the principles of the Conftitution of this realm, and hold in the utmoft abhorrence and deteftation the late daring outrage committed on his Majefty's Perfon to and from Parliament, and it is ready to give every aid to the Civil Magiftrate, in detecting and bringing to juftice the perfons concerned therein.

III. Refolved unanimoufly, That this Meeting feel with deep concern, that fuch outrage on his Majefty has occafioned the introduction of the two Bills now pending in Parliament, which, if paffed into laws, will very much affect the bufinefs of Tavern and Inn-keepers, Coffee-houfe-keepers, and Publicans in general.

IV. Refolved, That a Petition to the following effect be prefented to the Houfe of Commons:

"To

"To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain in Parliament
"assembled,

"The humble Petition of the PUBLICANS of the Cities of London and Westminster, and County of Middlesex, and parts adjacent,

"Sheweth,

"That your Petitioners conceive, that the Bills now pending in Parliament, intituled, 'An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies; and 'an Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable Practices and Attempts,' will, if passed into laws, very much affect our business as Publicans.

"That certain clauses in the said Bills, as they now stand, we have every reason to fear will prevent the Meetings of Friendly Clubs and Societies in Public-houses, and which Clubs and Societies will be involved in their operation; and therefore, if such Bills are passed into laws, your Petitioners and their families will, as your Petitioners apprehend, be involved in the consquence thereof.

"Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this Honourable House to take their case into consideration, and grant them such relief as in your wisdom shall seem meet; and, if necessary, to be heard by Counsel in support of their Petition.

"And your Petitioners will ever pray."

V. Resolved unanimously, That William Mainwaring, Esq. Chairman of the Middlesex and Westminster Sessions, and also Member of Parliament for the County of Middlesex, be requested to present such Petition; and that the Chairman, with the following persons, Mr. Weir, Mr. Paas, Mr. Jones, Mr. Cox, Mr. Plater, are appointed a Committee to wait on Mr. Mainwaring with such request.

VI. Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Committee of this Society for calling the same.

VII. Resolved, That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman, and advertised in some of the public Newspapers.

VIII. Resolved unanimously, That another General Meeting of this Society be held at the Shakespeare Tavern, Covent Garden, on Monday next, (this day) at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, for the purpose of collecting the Publicans together, to sign the Petition; and in the mean time that it lie for signatures of Publicans only at the following houses:

Mr. Halliday, Barking Dogs, Tabernacle Walk, Moorfields; Mr. Stone, Marquis of Granby, South Audley-street; Mr. Pike, Punch Bowl, Queen-square, Moorfields; Mr. Davis, Brewers Arms, Symonds Wharf, Tooley-street; Mr. Plater, Three Pigeons, Butcher-hall-lane; Mr. Cotterell, Half-way-house, St. George's-fields; Mr. Hill, Marlborough Arms, Thornhaugh-street, Tottenham court-road; Mr. Joachim, King's Head, Great Portland-street, Mary-bone; Mr. Nickals, George, Jermyn-street, St. James's; Mr. Sambrooke, Crown and Grapes, Hart-street, Bloomsbury; and Mr. Eden, King's Arms, Compton-street, Soho.

JOHN WRIGHT, Chairman.

Resolved unanimously, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his manly and upright conduct in the Chair this day.

By Order,

W. R. H. BROWN, Secretary.

Nov. 21, 1795.

SATUR-

November 21.

SATURDAY about two o'clock, in consequence of advertisements, several thousand Weavers assembled near the Salmon and Ball, Bethnal Green, to take into consideration a Petition to the House of Commons, against the Bill brought in by Mr. Pitt, to prevent the People from Meeting, &c. Mr. Heron was called to the Chair, when several Resolutions were passed and a Petition against the Bill agreed upon. About half past three the Meeting adjourned and dispersed in a very orderly manner. The magistrates belonging to the Public Office, Worship-street, attended, but did not interfere.

THE Counter Petition of the Real Electors of Westminster, in favour of the Bills now pending in Parliament, for suppressing Sedition, is now lying for signatures at the Star and Garter Tavern, Pall-Mall.

In this Petition the Electors of Westminster complain of the infringements on their rights by the Meeting of pretended Inhabitants holden in Palace-Yard on Monday last; and after declaring their reasons for approving the regulations of the said Bills, the Electors pray that the same may be passed.

November 18, 1795.

Nov. 18, 1795.

The COUNTER PETITION of the Electors of Westminster to the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament assembled, in favour of the two Bills in Parliament for suppressing Sedition; which Petition now lies at the Star and Garter Tavern, Pall-Mall, for signatures. The following is a Copy:

WE, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being Electors for Members to serve in Parliament for the city and liberty of Westminster, beg permission to lay before this Honourable House our humble Petition and Address relative to the two Bills now pending in this House: one entitled, "A Bill for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," the other entitled, "A Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts."

We beg leave to declare to this Honourable House, that we entirely approve the regulations of the said Bills, believing them to be made necessary by the Republican enormities of the present time; and being perfectly satisfied that they contain nothing incompatible with the enjoyment of all those rights, liberties, and privileges which belong to Englishmen, and which, we verily believe, Englishmen will enjoy no longer, without the proposed restrictions on the licentiousness and sedition that now threaten us.

We have long been deeply impressed on viewing the baneful effects of dangerous opinions, propagated by seditious and inflammatory publications; by Debating Societies and Political Lectures; and by affiliated Clubs and Jacobin Societies; particularly by one called the London Corresponding Society. But the late outrages, of which this Honourable House are well informed, have increased our anxiety to a degree of apprehension, that nothing could allay, but the wise measures now pursuing in this and the other House of Parliament. It is therefore our humble prayer to this Honourable House, That the aforesaid two Bills may be passed in such a manner as

to

to the wisdom of this House shall seem fit; trusting and hoping that any alterations, which it may be thought proper to make therein, may be to render them more efficacious for attaining their proposed objects.

The earnestness, which we thus venture to discover for the success of the intended regulations, arises from certain considerations that we will take the liberty of laying before this Honourable House for its better judgment therein.

We have often contemplated the proceedings laid open in the Reports of the Select Committee of this House, upon the subject of Seditious Societies, in the last Session of Parliament; and we remember the alarm therein expressed by the said Committee, when they discovered the union formed between the London Corresponding Society and the Society for Constitutional Information; an union formed for the purpose of carrying on with co-operation and redoubled effect their plans for undermining the established Laws and Government of this kingdom. We cannot but call to mind this extraordinary passage, when we see, as we now do, a new junction formed by the London Corresponding Society with another equally active, and which, after this union, must be considered as equally dangerous; we mean a junction with a set of persons calling themselves the Whig Club. Judging from recent transactions, we verily believe that these two Societies now act in conjunction; and we have no reason to doubt but the terms of union are the very principles and designs, which have all along been professed by the London Corresponding Society: for these latter are men who, it is well known, have kept in view one single object, from which they have never deviated; namely, the destruction of the Laws and Government; while the former have been known to change their principles and conduct according to times and circumstances.

Since the London Corresponding Society have received this accession of force, we feel additional reason to wish for some new regulations, that will guard the Laws and Government against the combination of such Clubs and Societies. We have noticed that, since this new coalition between wealth and poverty, the public has been more disturbed, than it had ever been before, by Meetings in the open air, by political Debates and Lectures, by the circulation of seditious pamphlets and hand-bills, and by every sort of agitation, that can be stirred up by a confederacy of parties, united for sacrificing the peace and laws of the country to their own schemes of ambition and Revolution.

One instance of these attempts is the cause of our present Address to this Honourable House. A Petition has been presented to this Honourable House, agreed upon at a tumultuary Meeting held in the very hearing of the Parliament and of the Courts of Justice, and consisting of a rabble collected from every part of the Metropolis; among which the greater number were, as we are informed, and believe, Members of the Corresponding Society; and this Petition, proposed and declaimed upon, to a noisy Assembly, who did not hear one entire sentence of what passed, is entitled "A Petition of the Inhabitants of the City and Liberty of Westminster."

We deny that the said Assembly was a Meeting of the Inhabitants of Westminster, but we adduce it as an example of the mischievous Assemblies, which so immediately call for restraint: we disavow the sentiments contained in that Petition; but we vouch it as a specimen of the falsehoods and impositions

impositions practised by these Leaders in Faction, to delude the ignorant, and inflame the fanatical: and we rely upon the whole narrative of that transaction, as delivered with triumph by the actors in it, and their agents, for incontrovertible testimony, out of the mouths and from the pens of the great agitators in Sedition, to demonstrate to this Honourable House, that unless the fury and folly of these men be put under some legal restraint, there will be neither freedom of person nor security of property left in this great City.

If every thing related of that Meeting were true, there would indeed be great cause for grief and indignation among others, besides ourselves, whose rights have been so daringly infringed; for it is reported, in some of the seditious prints, of which we complain, that the Petition alluded to was actually laboured and solicited by certain Members of the two Houses of Parliament: but a proceeding so gross and incompatible with the character of a Member of Parliament, as to procure Petitions to a body of which he is a Member; that is, to himself; and this, in order to back and uphold any opinions he may intend to deliver in the House, appears to persons like ourselves, with common understandings, so unsuitable and preposterous, that we do here declare, we believe it to be utterly impossible; and we say the same of another fact stated in the same libellous accounts; namely, that the Petition was proposed by a noble Person, who does not appear to answer the description therein given to the Petitioners, but who lives without the limits of the City and Liberty of Westminster.

We beg permission to mention another instance, in which the licentiousness of the Press has assailed the character of Members of this Honourable House. We have seen in a Newspaper of Monday, the 16th of November, certain printed Resolutions, relative to the two Bills in question, among which it is alledged, "That the privilege of discussing Public Affairs at Public Meetings was asserted in the Bill of Rights:" whereas we do not find a syllable of the sort in the Bill of Rights. To this falsehood is prefixed the name of a very Honourable Member of this House, who is of such known probity and honour, of such knowledge and ability, and withal is so averse from any thing that looks like Faction or Sedition, that to connect his name with such a position is the most shameful violation of decency and truth.

It is our firm persuasion, that nothing but gross misrepresentations like these, can indispose persons, otherwise loyally and honestly inclined, to the measures contained in the two Bills now pending in this House. We are of opinion no arguments can be urged against them, but such as arise from topics that are the very evils intended to be restrained; every day that has passed since they have been pending has given fresh proofs of their necessity; the seditious and disaffected seem to be the only petitioners for the continuance of their own enormities.

For our part, we consider what is alledged about Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights upon this occasion, as mere cant and imposition to mislead the ignorant. We are plain men, who deal little in words, and judge of things by their effects; and we are humbly of opinion, that if Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights give sanction to such seditious practices as now prevail, they ought to be revised, explained, and amended, so as to be rendered truly a protection to our Liberty, and not a cloak to Licentiousness.

nefs. But this, we believe, they already are; and nothing, in our opinion will more contribute to make them continue fo, than the aid of the two Bills now in queftion.

After what we have prefumed to offer to this Honourable Houfe on the fubject of feditious and inflammatory publications, we beg permiffion to add, that while it is intended that Political Debates and Lectures fhall be made fubject to a licence from the Magiftrate, it would be advifeable that pamphlet fhops, where fmall pamphlets are fold for fixpence and under, fhould in like manner be fubject to a licence.

For, we humbly fubmit it to this Honourable Houfe, that unlefs the licentioufnefs of the Prefs be put under reftraint, in the article of cheap pamphlets, the poifon of dangerous opinions will be fpread further than by Lectures and Debating Societies.

All which we humbly fubmit, &c. &c.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

Committee-Room, Nov. 23.

WHEREAS a falfe, fcandalous, and malicious libel has been publifhed, and pofted up in different parts of the town, evidently intended to calumniate this Society, it is abfolutely neceffary to refute fuch a bafe infinuation. The faid libel is dated from the Public Office, Lambeth-ftreet, and contains matter to the following purport:—"That a perfon named Thomas Barrow, who ftands indicted for receiving ftolen goods, was a Delegate, and a Member of this Society." Confcious as this Society is of its attention to keep immoral characters out of it, they cannot fuffer fo malicious a falfehood to go unnoticed; and they do folemnly declare, that the faid Thomas Barrow is not a Delegate, nor ever was; nor is he a Member of this Society.

(Signed by Order of the Committee) JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary,
ALEX. GALLOWAY, Affift. Sec.

CASTLE-BAYNARD WARD.

A RESPECTABLE number of the Inhabitants of this Ward, feeling themfelves deeply interefted in the momentous queftions which now agitate the public mind, judge it expedient that a Meeting of the Inhabitants fhould be called to confider the important Bills now pending in Parliament, and the propriety of petitioning againft the fame.

They therefore figned a requifition to Sir John Hopkins, Knight, Alderman of the faid Ward, foliciting him to convene a Meeting of the Inhabitants for the above purpofe, but this requeft he has thought fit peremptorily to refufe, on the ground, that he had made up his mind on the bufinefs, and that the Bills were neceffary and expedient. On this refufal, they forbear to fay more, than that he has thereby, as far as in his power, prevented them from the exercife of their acknowledged and conftitutional right to meet quietly and peaceably, to difcufs any public meafure in which they conceive their intereft or happinefs concerned.

Feeling fenfibly their beft and deareft rights thus invaded, and thoroughly fatisfied that fuch Meetings are perfectly legal, and congenial with the conftitution of their country, the gentlemen who figned the requifition, therefore,

fore, give this public notice, that there will be a Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Ward of Caſtle-Baynard, at the United Pariſh Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Old Fiſh-ſtreet, and St. Gregory, this afternoon, at five o'clock, for the purpoſes above-mentioned.

ST. JOHN OF WAPPING, 23d November, 1795.

AT a Public Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Pariſh, held this day in the Veſtry-room, and convened for the purpoſe of taking into conſideration the two Bills now depending in Parliament for the Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable Practices, and for preventing of Seditious Aſſemblies, &c. and alſo to conſider of the propriety of adopting and ſigning the Addreſs recommended by the Committee of the Tower Hamlets Aſſociation, on the ſubject of the late daring and highly criminal inſult on his Majeſty, the following Reſolutions were come to without one diſſentient voice:

I. Reſolved unanimouſly, That the inhabitants of this pariſh have ſeen with the utmoſt horror and indignation the daring attack made on the perſon of his Majeſty in his paſſage to Parliament.

II. Reſolved unanimouſly, That they will give every aid to the Civil Magiſtrate, in detecting and bringing to puniſhment the perſons concerned in the ſaid attack, being convinced that the laws now in exiſtence will be found fully ſufficient for that purpoſe.

III. Reſolved unanimouſly, That they do moſt cordially approve of the Petition agreed to at the County Meeting, held at the Mermaid, at Hackney, on Saturday laſt.

IV. Reſolved unanimouſly, That they will not adopt the Addreſs recommended by the Committee of the Tower Hamlets Aſſociation, becauſe that Addreſs goes to pledge all who may ſign it to ſupport the aforeſaid Bills now depending in Parliament, which Bills they deem to be an infringement of the rights and privileges of the people.

V. Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Churchwardens for their readineſs in calling the ſame, and for their candid and impartial conduct on this important and intereſting ſubject to all Engliſhmen.

VI. Reſolved unanimouſly, That the proceedings of this meeting be publiſhed in the public Papers (ſigned by the Churchwardens), and be alſo diſtributed through the pariſh by printed bills.

RICHARD MOUNT,
JAMES CHADWICK, } Churchwardens.

AT a numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Electors and Inhabitants of the Town and Borough of SOUTHWARK, held at the Town Hall, on the 23d of November, convened by requiſition, ſigned by a very reſpectable body of the above,

Sir WATKIN LEWES in the Chair.

Reſolved,

That it is the right and duty of the Freemen of this land to deliver their ſentiments upon public meaſures, and upon the conduct of public men, as often as occaſion may require.

That

That a Petition be presented to the House of Commons against the Bills now pending in Parliament, entitled "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and "An Act for preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies."

That it is the duty of the Representatives in Parliament to consult the opinion of their Constituents in every great national question, and especially where the Constitution itself may appear to suffer an alteration.

That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that the aforesaid Bills are direct violations of that clause in the Bill of Rights, which declares, "That it is the Right of the Subjects to Petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such Petitioning are illegal." Which Rights our ancestors did claim, demand, and insist upon, as their undoubted Rights and Liberties."

That Henry Thornton and Paul Le Mesurier, Esqrs. our Representatives, be instructed, in the following terms, to support the prayer of the Petition adopted this day, viz.

"We the Electors and Inhabitants of the Town and Borough of Southwark, in Common Hall assembled, view with concern and horror the two Bills now depending in Parliament, which, in their opinion, tend to destroy one of their dearest rights, upon which all the rest may eventually depend, viz. the Right of Petitioning either branch of the Legislature for Redress of their Grievances, and doubt not but you will, in compliance with their request, use your utmost endeavours to hinder the same from passing into Law."

That the Right Hon. Lord Wm. Russell be requested to present the said Petition.

That this Meeting beg leave to join their tribute of applause, with that of a grateful nation, to the Duke of Bedford, Earl of Lauderdale, the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, R. B. Sheridan, and Hon. Thomas Erskine, and other Noblemen and Gentlemen, who have so nobly and firmly stood forward in defence of the Rights of the People and the Constitution.

That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman, and inserted in the public Papers.

(Signed) WATKIN LEWES.

That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Chairman for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

ST. ANNE, WESTMINSTER.

November, 23, 1795.

AT a numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of this parish in Vestry, pursuant to a Notice published in the Church,

The following Resolutions were moved, and unanimously agreed to, namely,

Resolved,

That this Meeting do most cordially approve of the Petition to the House of Commons, moved by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and so unanimously agreed to by the General Meeting of the Inhabitants of the city of Westminster, in Palace-yard, on Monday last: it speaks their sentiments, and they concur

concur in its prayer against the two Bills now pending in Parliament, which violate the dearest privileges of Englishmen, and threaten with complete overthrow the Constitution that has been their birthright and their blessing.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, their upright and independent Member, for the firm, vigorous, and persevering opposition he has given to the dangerous principle of these Bills, and also, for his wise and seasonable motion for a Call of the House, that Bills of such unparalleled danger to the country might not be passed into Law, in the absence of a majority of its Representatives.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Church wardens, for their ready compliance in calling the Meeting, and for their candid and impartial conduct in the Chair.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. West, for his conduct in promoting the convening of this Meeting, for his conduct in at the same, and particularly for his accommodating the Parishioners with a convenient place for the occasion.

Resolved, That the transactions of this Meeting be inserted in the public prints.

The Petition was then received, and ordered to remain in the Vestry-Room, for the signatures of the Inhabitant Householders, till Wednesday next, at Twelve o'clock at noon.

RICHARD MURTHWAITE, Chairman.

WARD OF COLEMAN-STREET.

November, 23, 1795.

AT a very numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of COLEMAN-STREET WARD, convened by Mr. Alderman Macaulay, in the Parish Church of St. Stephen, Coleman-street, to take into consideration two Bills depending before Parliament, severally entitled, " An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and " An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies,"

Resolved Unanimously,

That the Inhabitants of this Ward, deeply sensible of the blessings they enjoy under the present Constitution, feel it their indispensible duty to express their detestation and abhorrence at the late outrage committed against the sacred person of the King, while in the discharge of one of the most important duties of his high office.

Resolved, That, in the present awful and momentous crisis, we rely with confidence on the wisdom of Parliament to provide such Laws for the preservation of our glorious Constitution, and that practical Liberty we have so happily enjoyed for a series of time, against the Seditious and Treasonable Attempts of all evil and designing men.

Resolved, That, although we lament by the publication of seditious papers and inflammatory speeches, attempts have been made to excite the minds of the multitude against the public measures brought forward in Parliament,

liament, yet we cannot but congratulate our Fellow-citizens on the lively intereſt that has lately appeared in every breaſt for the ſupport of our glorious Conſtitution, and the Liberties and Privileges enjoyed by Engliſhmen under his Majeſty's benign Government of theſe Realms; and we are well aſſured that, at this criſis, on our parts a due obedience to the Laws and a firm ſupport of the Executive Government, will tend more to the preſervation of thoſe Liberties and Privileges than any unfounded jealouſy of an Infringement on thoſe Rights.

Reſolved, That theſe Reſolutions be ſigned by the Chairman, and printed and publiſhed in the Morning and Evening Papers, and Copies delivered to the Members in Parliament for this City.

GEO. M'MACAULAY.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his upright and impartial conduct.

WARD OF BREAD-STREET.

London, the 23d Nov. 1795.

AT a Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Ward, at Cordwainers Hall, convened by Stephen Langſton, Eſq. their Alderman, on the requiſition of ſeveral of the ſaid inhabitants, to take into conſideration the alarming tendency of two Bills now pending in Parliament, intituled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings, and to conſider the propriety of preſenting a Petition to the Commons Houſe of Parliament, to prevent ſuch Bills being paſſed into Laws,"

STEPHEN LANGSTON, Eſq. in the Chair,

Reſolved unanimouſly, That this Meeting revolts with inexpreſſible horror at the late daring attack on his Majeſty's Perſon, and will afford every aſſiſtance in its power to diſcover the offenders.

Immediately afterwards the following Motions were made and ſeconded, viz.

That this Meeting revolts with equal horror at the meaſures that have been reſorted to in conſequence, and is convinced that the exiſting laws are ſufficiently efficacious for the exigencies of the preſent hour (pregnant with alarm to ſome, with expectation to others, and eventful to all) and are ſufficiently adequate to the preſervation of the public peace.

That the preſent Bills are a direct violation of our privileges, rights, and liberty, and ſubverſive of the fundamental principles of the Britiſh Conſtitution ſo glorioully eſtabliſhed by our anceſtors.

That the Honourable Houſe of Commons be petitioned to uſe their utmoſt effort to prevent theſe obnoxious Bills paſſing into Laws.

All which were ſeverally negatived by a great majority.

S. LANGSTON.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Stephen Langſton, Eſq. for his upright and impartial conduct in the Chair, and that theſe Reſolutions be inſerted in ſix of the daily Papers.

W. HALLIER.

SOUTH-

SOUTHWARK, Nov. 14, 1795.

"DEAR SIR,

"I HAVE feen, with very great concern, your name affixed to certain Advertifements in the public Papers, in direct oppofition to the fteps which Government think neceffary to be adopted to preferve the peace of the Metropolis, and of the County at large, againft the machinations of defigning, artful, and difaffected men, who feem to have in view the total overthrow of our glorious Conftitution. And, as it appears to me, that your being the champion of thofe people is totally incompatible with your continuing any longer a member of a corps of Volunteer Cavalry, who have avowedly ftood forward in the defence of their King and Conftitution, I muft beg the favour of you to have the goodnefs to return to me the Arms and Accoutrements which you received from me as your Commanding Officer.

"I am much hurt in being obliged to take this ftep;—but you will, I truft, readily perceive that the honour of the Southwark Troop demands it.

"I am, Sir, your moft obedient humble Servant,

"E. J. COLLETT, Cap. S. T. S. Y. C."

S. F. Waddington, Efq.

THE ANSWER.

"The fame principle which induced me, in April laft, to enroll myfelf in the Honourable Surry Corps, to defend my country againft a threatened foreign invafion, has equally impelled me to ftand forward in its defence againft a domeftic invafion of the Conftitution itfelf. "As the honour of the Southwark Troop" and the exiftence of the Britifh Conftitution are incompatible (as from your Letter it fhould feem they are) it is with mortification I comply with your requifition, in returning the Cloak and Cartouch Box, the only "Arms and Accoutrements" which I received from you as the "Commanding Officer." The infinuations in your letter againft the refpectable inhabitants of the firft commercial city in the world, I cannot defcend to reply to; I fhall only obferve that fuch epithets, fo applied, are as unworthy to be farther noticed, as they are unmerited.

(Signed) SAMUEL FERRAND WADDINGTON.

BRISTOL, Nov. 20.

THIS morning at twelve o'clock was held a General Meeting of the Inhabitants of this City, at their Guildhall, the moft crowded in the memory of the oldeft inhabitant. Dr. Fox, from the Chair, opened and explained the purport of affembling; and after a general expreffion of abhorrence at the late violence attempted on the Perfon of his Majefty, read the following Petition, which was repeated by a Gentleman in the middle of the Hall.

"To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament Affembled, the humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the City of Briftol,

"SHEWETH,

"That the Bill now brought into your Hon. Houfe, intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies," has

has justly excited in the minds of your Petitioners an anxious jealousy for the rights and liberties which, in the settlement of the Crown upon the illustrious House of Hanover, were recognized to be the true, ancient, and indubitable Rights and Liberties of the People of this kingdom. That the Bill now depending is intended to preclude the people from the free discussion of political questions, and the unrestrained right of petitioning against grievances, the exercise of which right is in the judgment of your Petitioners the surest means of preserving the Constitution inviolate, and the infringement of which right, as it blocks up those avenues through which the voice of a loyal people has been accustomed to approach the Throne, may enable an ambitious Ministry to trample alike on the prerogative of the Crown and the Liberties of your People. Your Petitioners are not less alarmed by another Bill now depending, intituled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts." Your Petitioners consider, that in a free country all acts to the commission of which pains and penalties attach, should be defined in language clear and unequivocal: the contrary being the tendency of this Bill, should it pass into a law, they will be plunged into the calamitous situation which is well described by a statute enacted in the first year of the reign of King Henry the Fourth, which says, "Whereas divers pains of treason have been ordained by statute, inasmuch that there is no man who doth know how he ought to behave himself, to do, speak, or say, for doubt of such pains."

"Your Petitioners therefore appeal to your Honourable House, in the firmest confidence that you will reject those violent measures, which threaten the destruction of their Liberties, and the subversion of our Glorious Constitution."

The celebrated Dr. Beddoes seconded the motion, by the following Address. "Before I attempt a short exposition of the tendency of the pending Bills, I thank you, Citizens of Bristol, in the name of our Country and of Human Nature, for that spirit of order which animates, while it controuls, the present Meeting. Would to God, certain persons could take a bird's-eye view of the present Assembly, that they might be convinced how little we are disposed to abuse those Rights which they deem it expedient to infringe. Citizens, I appeal to your knowledge of the history of our Country, whether extension of the law of Treason, by ambiguous statutes, have not ever been the *sign* of bad times, and the *cause* of worse. Penal laws couched in dark times are a loop in which the neck of the most innocent and unsuspecting of mankind may be caught. Suppose, on a retrospect of the calamitous events within our own memory, I were to give vent to feelings which such retrospect must excite—suppose I were to say, "that our American Colonies had been lost by blind perseverance and infatuated councils," it is not easy to say whether, in expatiating on the subject, I might not subject myself to transportation, or even forfeiture of life.

"Against the other Bill the statement of three simple facts will excite insuperable objections. By the acknowledgment of almost all men, even of those who dispense and enjoy the profits of them, Abuses exist in the Administration

miniſtration of our Government. Even our Miniſters allow that ſome Reformation is neceſſary. They deny that any time is proper for it. The only hope of ſuch Reformation lies in the exertions of the People. But ſhould theſe Bills paſs, all public meetings will be under the abſolute, though indirect controul of the governing power, through the intervention of magiſtrates, whom the exiſting Miniſter appoints, or too commonly poſſeſſes power to influence. Under the preſent laws, you have experienced the difficulty of aſſembling to deliberate on your grievances. Compare theſe facts; ſign the Petition againſt a Bill which makes that difficulty to all good purpoſes almoſt an impoſſibility; retire peaceably to your homes; and perſuade your fellow-citizens to do the like."

After DR. BEDDOES, MR. MATTHEW COATES began a moſt impaſſioned and ſpendid oration, which was interrupted by long and frequent applauſes; but its truths went ſo *home* to the feelings of that part of the audience whoſe ſituation renders them more eſpecially the ſufferers in the preſent calamitous times, that, at the requeſt of the Chairman, Mr. Coates concluded abruptly. It was a ſpeech which the poor will and ought to remember.—The queſtion was then called for, and the Petition voted unanimouſly.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, NOV. 23.

PETITIONS.

SIR WILLIAM HEATHCOTE preſented a Petition from Goſport, for Parliament to adopt meaſures whereby Seditious Meetings might be prevented. Ordered to lie on the table.

MR. ANNESLEY preſented a Petition from the fulleſt Meeting ever known of the Inhabitants of Reading, in Berkſhire, againſt the two Bills now pending in Parliament againſt Treaſon and Sedition. Ordered to lie on the table.

MR. HONEYWOOD preſented a Petition to the ſame effect from the Citizens and Freemen of the ancient City of Canterbury. Before he moved for it to lie on the table, he begged leave to ſay a few words not only upon the ſubject of the Petition itſelf, but the manner in which it was obtained. A Meeting of the Citizens and Freemen of Canterbury was, upon requiſition, regularly called by a magiſtrate, and the numbers which attended, as the ſubſcription would teſtify, were as large, ſtrong, reſpectable, and unanimous, as ever were before aſſembled within the walls of that City upon any ſimilar occaſion. The Petition was afterwards laid in the Town-Hall for the reception of ſignatures, the greater part of which were publicly known to be ſubſcribed by perſons of the utmoſt confidence and character; the Chairman of the Meeting received

ceived the public thanks for his fair, manly, and impartial conduct; and the whole of the people who attended the Meeting aſſembled and diſperſed with ſuch order and decorum, as reflected on them the higheſt honour and credit. Now, in reſpect to the political principles of theſe people, the City of Canterbury has at all times been a place remarkable for its loyalty to the Crown, and the partiality of the inhabitants towards the preſent Miniſter has been no leſs notorious. Mr. H. ſaid, he had no need to dwell upon this, for you, Sir, continued he, appealing to the Speaker, were with the Miniſter when they preſented him the Freedom of their City, and had an opportunity of obſerving what joy diffuſed itſelf on every countenance, and how all the different orders of the people ſtrained every nerve to expreſs their eſtimation of him. In the ſame degree have they ſhewn their partiality and attachment to the Conſtitution; for when Aſſociations were entered into throughout the kingdom for its defence againſt a foreign invaſion, no men came forward with more eagerneſs and enthuſiaſm. They formed a volunteer corps with almoſt unexampled expedition, and were both ready and willing to die in ſupport of the Conſtitution they ſo venerated and eſteemed. At that time he differed with them upon the principle of ſuch Aſſociations, becauſe he thought the alarm was raiſed throughout the kingdom merely for political purpoſes, yet he muſt give them ample credit for their loyalty, their attention to the laws, their order and diſcipline, and, above all, their regard to the peace of their country. At that time, however, as he had ſaid before, he differed with them, becauſe if the danger had been ſo great as it was pretended to be, he was confident that there was no neceſſity for ſupporting the Conſtitution by ſtrengthening the military power, as the people themſelves would never tamely ſubmit to a foreign enemy, and we had moreover our ſtrongeſt and moſt experienced bulwark to defend us—the wooden walls of old England. He was now convinced that he had been right, and this conviction was aided by the conduct of many of thoſe men from whom he formerly diſſented, for they had altered their opinions. There were various reaſons why he objected to the corps of cavalry which had been raiſed in Canterbury. Many of the perſons who formed that corps neglected their natural occupations, and at this particular period, when we ſuffered under the miſerable effects of a famine, the circumſtances were more diſtreſſing. He wiſhed to ſee the broad-ſword again converted to the plough-ſhare, and agriculture diligently and induſtriouſly encouraged, unleſs an actual neceſſity could be proved that it ought to be abandoned for a ſtate of warfare. Canterbury has of late had

more

more the appearance of a garriſoned town than a free city in a great commercial country, and conſequently peculiar hardſhips attendant on military operations have been endured. The camps in the neighbourhood alſo have been a great inconvenience, for notwithſtanding the good order and diſcipline which was moſt ſcrupulouſly exacted, ſome petty depredations and miſdemeanors would inevitably happen. As the oppreſſions and calamities of the people encreaſed, the pains and penalties were encreaſed alſo, and when the only privilege remaining was to complain, the people were deprived even of that vent; their mouths are to be ſtopped, and they muſt endure in ſilence. Mr. H. complained vehemently againſt ſuch an increaſe of pains and penalties, becauſe a mad individual or two had, in an extreme moment of deſperation, been guilty of an outrage, for the puniſhment of which the exiſting laws were fully ſufficient. Here he recollected another inconvenience to which the people were ſubjected by keeping ſo large a military force in the kingdom, which he begged leave to ſtate:—by the perpetual marching and counter-marching of troops the whole country was kept in a ſtate of alarm and confuſion, while, no ſooner was the rout of a detachment of ſoldiers made known than a party of conſtables were ſent before, to preſs the waggons of the farmers into the ſervice for the conveyance of ſtores and baggage. Now it ſo happened that theſe waggons were frequently and repeatedly preſſed at the very time they ſhould have been employed to carry off the ſcanty crops which the harveſt produced. The conſequence was, that a wet day enſued; the corn was obliged to remain upon the field, where it was materially damaged; and thus the ſcarcity became more univerſal. If theſe inſtances had happened only once, or twice, or thrice, he ſhould not have thought them worth mentioning; but they had happened ſo often, that he hoped the War-Office would take notice, and endeavour to prevent a repetition of ſuch things in future. To theſe grievances, among many others, have the people cheerfully ſubmitted; but becauſe freſh grievances are impoſed upon them, and they begin to feel the horrible calamities occaſioned by the war, they are to have their tongues muffled, and be deprived of thoſe liberties on which the Conſtitution depends. Miniſters may ſtop the ſpeech of the people, but can they ſtop their thoughts? No! The people cannot be inſenſible of feeling, and although they may ſuffer their ill-humour to gather in ſilence for a time, it will ultimately break out, and we know not what emotions may follow. The people have hitherto not only ſhewn a regard for the Conſtitution, but an unprecedented loyalty and attachment to the office and perſon of his

Majeſty.

Majeſty. Let Miniſters beware then how they act, leſt they not only provoke the reſentment of the people againſt their own deſperate meaſures, but weaken the ſecurity of the Throne itſelf. His Majeſty is protected by the love which prevails in the hearts of his ſubjects, and not by the multiplied barriers of pains and penalties, or the number of the military forces drawn round him. The only true and loyal men his Majeſty can look up to, are thoſe who know how much his ſafety depends on the eſtabliſhed law and conſtitution of the country; men who do not manifeſt their loyalty by empty profeſſions, but actual zeal, and who, while they reſpect his perſon, reſpect thoſe liberties alſo which give them a vigour and a deſire to defend him. Such men were they who had ſigned the Petition he preſented, and he hoped that ſuch Petitions would have weight. He had ſeen the table covered with Petitions complaining of the corrupt influence of the Crown, which, by being diſregarded, he feared had too juſtly given a reaſon for the people to conclude that Parliament did not attend to their real intereſts; for, if it had attended, he was ſure there would not only have been no war now, but there would have been no war from the beginning. Peace is the only remedy for diſſenſions, if diſſenſions do exiſt, and he hoped and truſted, therefore, that men who meant and acted ſo well as the Freemen and Citizens of Canterbury, would be attended to. He then moved that the Petition lie on the table. Ordered.

Lord Sheffield preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Briſtol, praying that the aforeſaid Bills might not paſs into a law.

Mr. Sheridan remarked, that the Bill ſeemed to have fallen into improper hands, for the noble Lord had not made any obſervations upon it, nor had he mentioned by how many perſons it was ſigned, though Mr. Sheridan underſtood it was ſigned by no leſs than *four thouſand!*

Lord Sheffield ſaid, that he found there was a neceſſity for ſtating the object of the Petition to the Houſe before he could obtain leave to preſent it, but he had not been informed from the Chair that the ſtatement of the number of ſignatures was neceſſary alſo. As to the names, he had never reckoned them; there might be four thouſand, and he ſuppoſed there were.

Mr. Sheridan repeated what he had before ſuſpected, that the Petition had fallen into improper hands; nor was he the only perſon who ſuſpected this, for he had received a letter from a gentleman at Briſtol, who was apprehenſive that the noble Lord would not make it known to be the general ſenſe of the inhabitants of Briſtol, and did therefore wiſh that it ſhould be ſtated to the Houſe. The

Petition

Petition was drawn up and ſigned in due form, and the ſignatures were thoſe of the moſt reſpectable perſons in that city.

Lord Sheffield ſaid, the Hon. Gentleman ſhould not put an untruth into his mouth, nor any man breathing. He did not know that the Petition was the general ſenſe of the People; he believed not, becauſe it came neither from the Corporation nor from a body of Merchants, but from the People indiſcriminately. He believed the ſignatures might be made by men of reſpectability, but he could not preſume to ſay ſo, as he had never looked at a ſingle name. The Petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Sir John Rous preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of the County of Suffolk, expreſſing their gratification at the eſcape of his Majeſty, and requeſting Parliament to prevent Seditious Meetings.

Mr. Fox wiſhed to know whether the Meeting was convened before the Bills were brought forward; whether the Bills were ever in their poſſeſſion?

Sir John Rous ſaid, the Meeting was convened by public advertiſement; that the perſons who attended it expreſſed their unanimous abhorrence of the attack upon his Majeſty; that there was only one diſſentient voice to the Petition, and he declared upon his honour, that he believed ninety-nine out of one hundred of the people of Suffolk were of the ſame opinion.

Mr. Fox ſaid, that this was not an anſwer to his queſtion. He wiſhed to know whether the People, when they aſſembled, underſtood that the terms of the Bills were to be diſcuſſed?

Sir John Rous ſaid, he had the advertiſement in his pocket, which he read. It contained no mention of the Bills whatever. The Petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Colonel Stanley preſented a Petition from the Town and Neighbourhood of Mancheſter and Salford, for the adoption of meaſures to prevent Public Meetings. It was ſigned, he ſaid, by 7351 perſons of the firſt character there, and ſo great was their zeal on this occaſion, that the whole of the ſignatures were affixed in the courſe of one day and a half. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Grey preſented a Petition againſt the Bills from the reſpectable Inhabitants of the Town of Southampton. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Fox preſented a ſimilar one from the Inhabitants of Norwich, ſigned by very many thouſands of reſpectable perſons; that they were of that deſcription he was well aſſured, and the fact, he truſted, would not be doubted even by the Member for that City (Mr. Windham), now one of his Majeſty's Miniſters, the names

of

of whoſe friends were to be found among the number. Ordered to lie on the table.—Mr. Windham was ſilent on the occaſion.

Mr. Sheridan preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Cheſter againſt the Bills. He ſtated, that previous to this, and inſtantly after the attack upon his Majeſty, an Addreſs of Congratulation had been handed about, and Petitions prepared in conſequence for an extenſion of the Penal Laws, with a philoſophy and rapidity unexampled. A Right Hon. Gentleman, not then in his place (Mr. Secretary Dundas), had declared that unleſs it was obvious that theſe Bills had the concurrence of the majority of the People, they ought not to paſs into a law; now there never was a more unanimous and decided manifeſtation than was at this moment given all the kingdom, that theſe Bills did not meet with the concurrence of the majority of the People. In proof of this aſſertion he read an extract from a letter, ſtating that this Petition was voluntarily ſigned by one thouſand two hundred and two inhabitants, while the maſs of the Corporation was ſet afloat to oppoſe it, and ſchool-boys engaged to ſign a counter-petition.

Lord Belgrave aſſerted, on the other hand, that the Petition to his Majeſty, lamenting the outrage, and recommending meaſures to put a ſtop to Public Meetings, was ſigned by ſeven or eight hundred of the moſt reſpectable Inhabitants of Cheſter; and in ſupport of this he referred to a letter, which ſtated at the ſame time that the Jacobins of that city were uſing almoſt every endeavour to get hands to their Petition, which the author of the letter feared would be too ſucceſsful; and recriminating on Mr. Sheridan, ſaid that his Petition was ſigned entirely by ſchool-boys, apprentices, diſſenting tradeſmen, and people of the loweſt claſs, who were firſt aſked whether they had any objection to a good peace, and were then told that this was the only way by which they could hope to obtain it.

Mr. Sheridan replied, that as to the mutual charge of obtaining ſignatures from ſchool-boys, he had nothing further to obſerve than that there was a great impropriety in taking them away from *learning Greek*; and in regard to the fears of the noble Lord's friend, that the oppoſite party would be too ſucceſsful, they were already confirmed. Now as to the other part, that this Petition came from the lower orders of people, it appeared that the lower orders had a better knowledge of the Conſtitution of their Country than the higher, for they had petitioned Parliament, where the laws, and every alteration of the laws, can alone originate; while the higher orders had propoſed to the King to do what he cannot do, to alter the laws independent of Parliament.

Lord Belgrave explained, that they merely petitioned the King to recommend ſome ſtronger meaſures to the Legiſlator. As to the ſucceſs of the other Petition, he ſaid, it had been obtained by diſgraceful arts, and though a meeting was called by public advertiſement, that advertiſement was inſerted only in an inflammatory paper.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, that thus after the Bills have paſſed, there can never be another Meeting; becauſe, an advertiſement for that purpoſe would be rejected by the Miniſterial papers, and all the Oppoſition papers would be deemed inflammatory.—The Petition was ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Sheridan preſented a Petition againſt the Bills from the inhabitants of Sheffield. He hoped the Houſe would not be ſo terrified at the name of Sheffield, as to reject the Petition; becauſe, on a former occaſion, they had rejected one that was couched in diſreſpectful terms. This was worded with temperance, and the number of ſignatures was nearer eight than ſeven thouſand.

Mr. Sturt preſented a Petition againſt the Bills ſigned by 12,113 perſons. Many of them, he ſaid, were great and reſpectable tradeſmen, and the reſt were mechanics, artiſans, and labourers, and a no leſs uſeful and valuable part of the community. Theſe people in part formed the London Correſponding Society; that Society which a noble Lord (Mornington) whom he did not then ſee in his place, had on a former evening connected with the perſons who committed the outrage on his Majeſty, but which connection he doubted not to diſprove. The noble Lord had ſaid that he had bought a book at a ſhop, which recommended regicide, and that this book was printed and publiſhed by the avowed printer and publiſher for that Society, and hence he deduced his concluſion, that that Society and the perpetrators of that outrage were connected. Although not in the habit of public ſpeaking, Mr. Sturt ſaid he was not liable to miſrepreſent the aſſertions of the noble Lord, becauſe he had taken his words down. As the noble Lord had endeavoured to prove the connection by aſſerting that Citizen Lee was printer to the Society, ſo ſhould he endeavour to diſprove the connection by aſſerting that Citizen Lee was *not* printer to the Society, and he was able to do ſo from his own enquiries of the mother of that man and of the man himſelf, who had both poſitively denied the fact. He had made theſe enquiries; firſt, in conſequence of ſome doubts which he entertained; and ſecondly, to gain ſuch information on the ſubject as his Parliamentary duty required. He went firſt to the mother of Citizen Lee, who lives in a court in St. Anne's-ſtreet, and who informed him that her ſon did once belong to the London Corref-

Correſponding Society, but that he was no longer a member of it, having been twice turned out; and this was afterwards confirmed by Citizen Lee, who aſſured him of the ſame. Mr. Sturt hoped that this would do away the odious impreſſion which the Houſe had received of the intentions of the London Correſponding Society, as connected with the book which this man publiſhed, a book which he conſidered as diſgraceful to bring before that Houſe. Take away the title of this book, he ſaid, and there was nothing in it; nothing, at leaſt, worthy the notice of that Houſe; and the man had declared to him that he merely put that title to it becauſe the people otherwiſe would not buy it. The paragraph on tyrannicide, he ſaid, was copied from a Paper called the Cabinet, which was publiſhed by a ſociety of Gentlemen twelve months ago, and other parts were of a diſtant date. To ſhew the abſurdity of the book, and how mean, contemptible, and inſignificant it was for their notice, he quoted a few words with the explanations annexed to them, as the noble Lord had done upon a former evening. Theſe were, "BRASS! i. e. *Dundas.*"—"CONSEQUENCE! *Pitt, full dreſſed, ſurrounded by his myrmidons of the Treaſury.*"—"PENSIONS! *Sinecures which a Miniſter receives for himſelf and his relations, of* 4000*l. a year, and yet not ſatisfied.*" How could any perſon imagine ſuch ridiculous and ſtupid paragraphs were treaſon? And then, why ſhould a large body of people be concerned in the vending of ſuch wretched ſtuff? Many of the perſons ſo implicated were as good friends to the Conſtitution as the noble Lord who brought that charge againſt them; and he would undertake to aſſert, that at the Meeting at Copenhagen-houſe, there was not one incendiary amongſt them. Nay, he would go further, for he would proclaim them better friends to the Conſtitution than many other perſons high in power and authority, particularly a certain *Mufti*, who had the audacity to declare, that "The maſs of the People in every country had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them."---"Theſe People are Friends to a Parliamentary Reform, and they apprehend that if the Parliament does not accompliſh that Reform, a Revolution will, and ſo do I, ſays Mr. Sturt; nay, I will go farther, for I don't know, but I think a Revolution the better of the two." At any rate he thought them better friends to the Conſtitution than the Right Honourable Gentleman oppoſite, for that Right Honourable Gentleman had deſerted the cauſe which he profeſſed to ſupport, while they maintained it ſtill. He it was who formerly agitated the queſtion of a Parliamentary Reform, and publiſhed a moſt infamous book upon the ſubject that had ſerved no other purpoſe than to put him into

 the

the poſſeſſion of power, while it ſet the whole globe in a flame, and by his principles and his profeſſions had they been deceived.

It was a ſhame when a poor ſoldier, or a ſailor, after ſpending a long life, and loſing a limb or two in the ſervice of his country, received no more than 5l. a year to ſubſiſt on, that men by duplicity and deceit ſhould receive a penſion of 4000l. a year for doing nothing except conſpiring againſt the liberties of their country, and he would object to it, ſo long as he drew breath. The declarations of the noble Lord, he ſaid, upon the proceedings at Copenhagen-houſe, had gained much more ſupport than he expected; fortunately thoſe declarations could deprive no man who attended that Meeting of his life; and if ever the caſe ſhould come before a Britiſh Jury, he doubted not but all treaſonable and ſeditious intentions on the part of that Meeting would be completely negatived. As a proof of their regard for peace and order, he read an extract from Thelwall's exhortation on that day, which informed people that it was not by tumult nor by violence they were to hope for redreſs, but by reaſon only. Was this a language to excite diſorder? Then the only difference between the Right Honourable Gentleman was, that the one had abandoned Parliamentary Reform, while the others ſtood by it, and would ultimately gain their object.

Now, ſaid Mr. Sturt, if the Houſe will give me leave, I will read a bit of treaſon. Since I have ſhewn what is *not* treaſon, I will now ſhew what *is* treaſon, and if the Houſe knows its own dignity, and feels the ſame regard for it that I do, it will not heſitate one moment to proſecute the author of it. The author is a Magiſtrate of Newfoundland, a man directly in the pay, and under the influence of Miniſters, and I will venture to aſſert, that the paragraph I am now about to quote from a pamphlet he has publiſhed, is one of the moſt atrocious libels that ever has appeared againſt the Houſe of Commons, and againſt the Conſtitution of this Country. He ſays, "*In fine, the Government of England is a* MONARCHY; *the Monarch is the ancient ſtock from which have ſprung thoſe goodly branches of the Legiſlature the Lords and Commons, that at the ſame time give ornament to the tree, and afford ſhelter to thoſe who ſeek protection under it. But theſe are ſtill* ONLY BRANCHES, *and derive their origin and nutriment from their common parent*; THEY MAY BE LOPPED OFF, AND THE TREE IS A TREE STILL, SHORN INDEED OF ITS HONOURS, BUT NOT LIKE THEM CAST INTO THE FIRE." Lopped off! continued Mr. Sturt, this is a pretty fellow! What

ſort

ſort of a Tree will the Conſtitution be when the Houſe of Commons is lopped off? Miniſters know that an admonition has been given reſpecting this, and that a letter was ſent upon it, and yet the whole has hitherto been ſuffered to remain unnoticed by them. On this account it was that Mr. Sturt now brought it forward. It was a moſt infamous libel, and the duty he owed to Parliament and to his Country obliged him to do ſo. If Lee is amenable to the laws, is not Reeves ſo? Mr. Sturt was unwilling to inſtitute proſecutions againſt any man, but when a man like this went trotting about to every dirty hole and corner to hunt up ſeditious publications, for he had even been and threatened Citizen Lee's mother for ſelling a few pamphlets, while he himſelf was guilty of a greater crime, he ſhould not be permitted to paſs unnoticed. It was impoſſible that the Right Hon. Gentleman oppoſite (the Attorney General) could read every pamphlet that was publiſhed; but notice had been given him of this, and therefore he ſhould have examined it. Mr. Sturt concluded a very bold, argumentative, and conſtitutional ſpeech, by moving for leave to bring up the Petition, which was not ſigned by a few ſchool-boys, but by TWELVE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED and THIRTEEN PEOPLE, a great part of whom had not only given their names, but places of abode.

The Motion being put and ſeconded, leave was given to bring up the Petition. [See this Petition, p. 130. For *four hundred thouſand*, the words "the underſigned Britons" were ſubſtituted in the copy preſented to the Houſe.]

MR. WILBERFORCE had received a letter from the noble Lord (Mornington), who was unable to attend the Houſe by indiſpoſition, or he would have been perfectly ready to eſtabliſh the connection.

MR. SHERIDAN ſaid, that if the noble Lord, or, indeed, if the Houſe, by its votes, could be cleared from the imputation of indulging in calumnies, it muſt be by conſenting to go into an enquiry and evidence of facts, and not by reſting upon bare ſuppoſitions. The more he enquired, the more he was convinced that the noble Lord had been egregiouſly miſinformed: aſſertion was no proof. It came out, upon enquiry, that Citizen Lee was not Printer to the Correſponding Society; that inflammatory publications were not circulated by their authority, nor had the particular hand-bill, entitled, "King-Killing no Murder," been authoriſed by them. The whole muſt have been the fabrication of ſome perſon who wiſhed to bring the Society into diſcredit. He remembered a circumſtance ſimilar which took place in "The Society of Friends

Friends of Freedom:" a perſon who, from his violence, was ſuſpected of being a ſpy, contrived to extinguiſh the lights, when a great number of hand-bills were thrown about the room, of a ſeditious and inflammatory nature. Upon the lights being reſtored, and the hand-bills read, the Society expreſſed their abhorrence of this tranſaction, and their diſapprobation of the hand-bills; and they uſed every endeavour to diſcover the authors of them, who were probably the Government Reporters. Was it, he aſked, fitting that the Houſe ſhould aſſume the fact of ſuch hand-bills being publiſhed by the Correſponding Society, and upon that aſſumption ſhould paſs Acts, which, in their extent, affected the whole kingdom? He complimented Mr. Sturt highly on his ſpeech, which he declared to have contained much good ſenſe, and to have been delivered in as plain, manly, and conſtitutional language as he had ever heard. He animadverted on the pamphlet mentioned by Mr. Sturt, which was clearly a libel upon the Houſe of Commons; was it a light thing that ſuch a libeller as this ſhould go unpuniſhed? That ſuch a libeller ſhould be ſuffered to print, and to circulate the moſt atrocious libels upon the Conſtitution unnoticed, was ſcandalous. If there was any thing, he ſaid, which ſerved to keep up in the country the ball of contention, it was this glaring partiality. This diſcovered itſelf in the year 1791, after the Birmingham riots. Nothing of that activity was diſcovered againſt the Church and King mob, who deſtroyed the houſes of peaceable citizens; nothing of that activity againſt the libellers of Diſſenters, when they were charged with wanting to poiſon the river water. Where were the importunity and activity of the Legiſlature on thoſe occaſions? It was not his wiſh, Mr. Sheridan ſaid, to proſecute for publications in general; but there were various publications, not only of Mr. Reeves, but of Mr. Arthur Young, which were infinitely more atrocious libels againſt the Conſtitution, than any that had been pointed out by the noble Lord. Nor could he ſuppoſe, that if a proſecution againſt ſuch libellers was moved, any of his Majeſty's Miniſters dare oppoſe it.

Mr. Canning repeated his former arguments, that were it ſtated as an hiſtoric fact that ſuch an outrage was committed on his Majeſty, that a few days previous to the circumſtance taking place an hand-bill had been circulated at a Public Meeting that King-killing was no murder, and yet, that no connection could be traced between that outrage and this hand-bill, that few or none could be found who would be inclined to draw ſuch an improbable concluſion. He ſaid, he believed the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Sturt) was

ſingular

ſingular in his opinion, that, excepting the title, he ſaw no harm in the hand-bill.

Mr. Whitbread declared, he could not conceive how the Hon. Gentleman, by his ſpeech, had eſtabliſhed any ſuch connection. If that Hon. Gentleman had conſented to have gone into an enquiry as to facts, then the hand-bill might have been traced to its ſource; but without ſuch a Committee being inſtituted, he conſidered it as a foul calumny to inſinuate, that the hand-bill was the production of the London Correſponding Society; whilſt, at the ſame time, every requeſt to have an enquiry inſtituted was refuſed.

Mr. Lambton ſaid, a doubt aroſe in his mind, whether the hand-bill was written by any Member of the London Correſponding Society, or by one of the Spies or Reporters of Government? The quotations given by a noble Lord rendered ſuch an enquiry neceſſary; without an enquiry, the publication was undeſerving of notice. It had been ſaid in behalf of the noble Lord (Lord Mornington), that he was not in the habit of making raſh aſſertions. He believed that to be true, and yet, as thoſe on his ſide of the Houſe, who had made enquiry, denied the charges adduced, he ſubmitted, whether, in point of candour and duty, the Houſe ought not to have inſtituted an enquiry? He adverted to the pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on the Engliſh Government," which was aſcribed to Mr. Reeves, and declared, that it was the duty of the Attorney General, if he meant to adminiſter equal juſtice, to proſecute the author of the pamphlet with due ſeverity. In that pamphlet, Monarchy had been compared to a tree; but he would obſerve, that, in order to its growth in this country, it was neceſſary that it ſhould be planted in the ſoil of liberty; in no other would it flouriſh; in this ſoil alone would it attain vigour; and if endeavours ſhould be uſed to tranſplant it into any other ſoil, the fair and goodly tree would pine away, decay, and periſh.

Mr. Canning roſe to explain. One gentleman, he remarked, had intimated, that the hand-bill, excepting the title alone, was but little objectionable; another gentleman had vindicated this aſſertion; he therefore thought he had a right to draw the inference he had done on ſuch declarations.

Mr. Sturt roſe to explain. He declared he did not mean to ſay that the doctrine contained in theſe hand-bills and pamphlets was not abominable; but that, take away the title—"King-killing no Murder," much of the offence contained in the publications would ceaſe.

Mr. Martin in a ſhort ſpeech diſclaimed the idea that what any Hon. Gentleman on that ſide of the Houſe ſaid, ſhould be imputed to him, or conſidered as the act of the whole; that it was ſufficient for him to expreſs his own ſentiments, without being accountable for the expreſſions of others.

Mr. Grey vindicated Mr. Sturt from what he termed, the miſrepreſentation of an Honourable Gentleman, (Mr. Canning); he ſhewed that the Honourable Gentleman's, (Mr. Canning's) favourite argument, that ſuch a doctrine was preached at Copenhagen-houſe, and that ſuch a practice followed, might be retorted on Miniſtry. Mr. Sturt's ſpeech, he ſaid, contained much good ſenſe, and ſound conſtitutional principles. He pointed out the dilemma in which the Houſe was involved. It was ſaid to be neceſſary, on account of what had paſſed at Copenhagen-houſe, to paſs a law to reſtrain public diſcuſſion; and yet it appeared that no ſuch doctrine was held as has been ſtated, nor could the offenſive hand-bill be brought home to that Society. Would the people of England, he aſked, tamely look on, and ſee their liberties torn from them upon ſuch a ſhallow pretence? The ſpirits of Engliſhmen were not, he hoped, ſo far extinguiſhed; the people of England would know that nothing objectionable had paſſed at Copenhagen-houſe; and they would reject the idea, that, becauſe a ſingle ſolitary hand-bill had been circulated which had no connection with the Society, therefore, with one ſweep of authority, the whole liberties of the people of England are to be obliterated! Mr. Grey animadverted on the pamphlet of Mr. Reeves, and obſerved, that, in better times, his Majeſty's Attorney General would have inſtituted a proſecution againſt ſuch a libeller of the Conſtitution on his own accord. So far from giving credit to the exiſtence of the treaſons reported, he verily believed that no other treaſon was hatched, but what proceeded from his Majeſty's Cabinet. It had been aſſerted in another place, that the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. To uſe the words of an Honourable Gentleman, when he heard ſuch doctrine, and ſaw ſuch practices immediately follow that doctrine, what was he to ſuppoſe, but that a ſyſtem of terror was to be attempted to be introduced in this country, and that a conſpiracy againſt the liberties of the people actually exiſted?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, the Houſe had inſenſibly got into a warm debate before the order of the day had been read, and conſequently before the real buſineſs of the day was fairly under their conſideration; he complained of the protraction which the important buſineſs of the day was likely to experience from the irregular debate that had ariſen. It was in his idea unne-

ceſſary to enter into the merits of the queſtion at that time, he would therefore reſerve himſelf until the Bills went into a Committee. Moſt of the arguments urged againſt the meaſures, he thought, applied the other way, and were cogent reaſons for adopting them, however unneceſſarily they had been brought forward in that ſtage of the buſineſs. But what purpoſe could be anſwered by this irregular diſcuſſion, he was at a loſs to imagine, except that of delaying the buſineſs for a day.

Mr. Fox ſaid, he conſidered the converſation to be perfectly in order. A large body of the people of England had been accuſed of diſloyalty and ſedition, and the proofs, which were neceſſary to confirm the allegations, had been reſolutely denied. No attempt, therefore, that could be made to free them from ſuſpicion, and to confute the reflections which had been thrown upon their characters by a noble Lord on a former night, could in juſtice be deemed diſorderly or irregular He concurred completely with his Honourable Friend (Mr. Sturt) reſpecting the hand-bill that had been ſo much talked of reſpecting *king-killing*, that excepting the title, the contents of the paper were too contemptible for notice; and he ſubmitted it to the conſideration of the Houſe, whether it was fair to apply the title of a hand-bill, the matter of which was too inſignificant to be regarded in any other light than as conſummately contemptible, of a hand-bill, the real origin of which it was impoſſible to aſcertain, to the whole proceedings of any ſociety, who never appeared by any one public act avowed by them, to have uſed or countenanced a ſingle word which the hand-bill contained. Nor was this the only point of view, Mr. Fox ſaid, in which it could be proved that the diſcuſſion was in order. Bills had been brought into Parliament, apparently founded on the abuſes practiſed by certain Societies, the proceedings of which had been adverted to in debate; it was therefore ſtrictly regular to accompany a petition from theſe Societies with an open and candid explanation of their principles and views: It was ſtrictly regular to enquire into the facts upon which the meaſures propoſed were ſaid to reſt; and to inveſtigate the grounds of the deſpotic plan which Miniſters had formed of reducing the people under a yoke, which neither they nor their fathers had been accuſtomed to bear, nor were willing to ſubmit to. With reſpect to what had been urged on the impropriety of delaying the progreſs of the Bill, in his opinion, the Houſe would do eſſential ſervice to themſelves and their conſtituents, if they could but retard the paſſing of the Bills for a ſingle day. It had been ſaid, that gentlemen on the ſide of the Houſe on which he ſtood felt ſtrong upon the occaſion, and that

that they were forward in bringing on the debate before it could regularly take place: he owned that he had no ſmall ſatisfaction in the conſciouſneſs that they did not feel weak, and that their opinion poſſeſſed every ſanction which the loud and unanimous voice of the people could confer. All he wiſhed was, that Miniſters would abide by their declaration, and that they would not continue obſtinately to preſs the Bills upon the Houſe, after they were found to be generally unpopular.

MR. MORRICE ROBINSON was decidedly of opinion, that the Bills ought not to be hurried through the Houſe, but that time ſhould be allowed for aſcertaining the ſentiments and opinions of their conſtituents.

MR. POWYS ſaid, that underſtanding Citizen Lee to be the publiſher or vender of certain inflammatory papers, extracts of which had been read to the Houſe on a former night, he was led to conclude that Citizen Lee was the Printer to the London Correſponding Society. He therefore from ſuch premiſes inferred, that the inflammatory papers originated in the London Correſponding Society.

GENERAL TARLETON ſaid, he could not praiſe the ingenuity of Mr. Powys, in drawing ſuch concluſion from ſuch premiſes. Becauſe Citizen Lee ſold the ſpeech of Mr. Thelwall, no reaſon could, in his opinion, be drawn to prove the connection of Citizen Lee with the London Correſponding Society. The Right Hon. Gentleman oppoſite to him might juſt as well contend, that becauſe his ſpeech might appear in ſome of the public prints the next morning, he was, in in ſome degree, anſwerable for all the ſentiments which thoſe prints might contain.

MR. COURTENAY roſe in order to prove the abſurdity of Mr. Powys's argument. Thelwall's ſpeech, it ſeemed, was ſold by Citizen Lee. Perhaps the Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech would be printed in the True Briton; did it follow from thence that the Printer of the True Briton was his Printer? With reſpect to the Hand-bill in queſtion, entitled, "King-killing," Mr. Courtenay ſaid, he was firmly perſuaded, that it had been written and circulated by ſome of the Spies, *alias* Reporters of Government, in order to fix a ſtigma on the characters of thoſe whoſe proceedings they were appointed to watch. His conviction on that point, he declared, was ſtrengthened by the circumſtances attending the pop-gun plot. A man had been expelled from the Correſponding Society for immorality. This degradation he conſidered as an inſult, and determined to take a ſpeedy opportunity of revenging it. In order to effect this, he gave information to the Privy Council of

of a plot which had been formed to aſſaſſinate his Majeſty, naming, at the ſame time, a few reſpectable perſons concerned in the treaſon, and, by way of evidence, produced a drawing of an air-gun. Upon that information they were taken into cuſtody, and confined in priſon for ſeveral months, without any plauſible reaſon being aſſigned for ſuch a violent proceeding. Mr. Parkinſon, a medical Gentleman of high reſpectability, had ſpoken to the general good character of one of the ſuſpected delinquents; but his interference proved of no benefit in juſtifying their characters, or meliorating their ſituations. The individual in queſtion entreated being brought to trial, but his enemies could not face him before an Engliſh Jury. He demanded his releaſe, but his demand was refuſed; and he was deſired to ſupplicate, as a favour, what he could not obtain as a right; as, Mr. Courtenay ſaid, the Lords of the Privy Council never grant juſtice but as a favour. This plot had long afforded a topick for the Miniſterial Newſpapers to exerciſe their ingenuity upon, and was induſtriouſly ſpread by the *Chief Juſtice of Newfoundland*. All the time they were in confinement, paragraphs appeared in the True Briton, the Sun, the Times, and even in the Gazette, in order to prejudice the country againſt thoſe who had been falſely calumniated; and in order to influence the minds of a Britiſh Jury, to give an unjuſt ſentence, founded upon a perverſion of the laws. Mr. Courtenay declared, he was no apologiſt of theſe Societies; he never attended them, nor bore any part in their councils, conſequently he knew not whether they had been guilty of abuſes or not. If they had committed any irregularities, the exiſting laws, he was ſatisfied, were ſufficient to puniſh them. In a letter written by Smith to the Privy Council, he mentioned the relief which he had received from the London Correſponding Society; and he ſhould not have been ſurpriſed, by a mode of reaſoning analogous to that which had been adopted that evening, that if theſe men had been found guilty, from the ſimple circumſtance of Smith's receiving a pecuniary aſſiſtance from the Correſponding Society, his crime would have been charged upon that body. At leaſt it would not have been more abſurd and unjuſt than to implicate that Society in all the ſeditious libels which had been publiſhed by Citizen Lee. If there were any who doubted the ſufficiency of the exiſting laws, he called upon them to reflect on the hard fortune of a poor Bookſeller, who had been conſigned to ſeveral years impriſonment, for ſelling a pamphlet of the contents of which he was wholly ignorant, a ſeverity which he thought might have ſatisfied the cold-blooded malignity of Miniſters themſelves.

[Mr.

[MR. STURT then read the paſſage formerly quoted from a pamphlet, entitled, "Thoughts on Government," by way of preface to a motion for directing the Attorney General to proſecute the author for a libel. This brought on a debate, in the courſe of which, the whole of the pamphlet was read, and an adjournment voted to Thurſday. The affair was then reſumed, and the final iſſue was a vote, declaring the pamphlet to be a libel, and ordering the Attorney General to proſecute the ſuppoſed, or oſtenſible author.]

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER then ſaid, there were two purpoſes for which he roſe at this moment, partly from what had been ſaid to-night, and partly alſo to take an opportunity of giving a notice. Conſidering the unexampled miſrepreſentations which ſome Gentlemen had taken pains to make of the Bills which were now before the Houſe, thoſe who thought as he did on theſe Bills, or their abſolute neceſſity, would feel it a duty which they owe to the country, to look forward to the moment of their diſcuſſion, when an explanation ſhould be made of the ſhameful miſrepreſentation of theſe Bills. Theſe Gentlemen aſſumed to themſelves a ſucceſs with the public, in conſequence of their own ſhameful miſrepreſentations, which, when they came to be expoſed, would check their daring projects, and damp their ſanguine hopes and premature triumph. If they would wave the effect of that ſtupid miſrepreſentation, and compare the real ſenſe of the people, he ſhould not be afraid to meet them, and to argue on the popularity of the two Bills now before the Houſe. If they would compare the ſenſe of the People, as it had been fairly called for, and candidly taken, he would debate the queſtion upon that ground. But here he muſt obſerve, that according to the true principles of the Conſtitution, he was ready to meet the queſtion on theſe Bills, and to examine the caſe on the one ſide, and on the other. In ſtating the opinion of the People, it ſhould be aſked what was the opinion of thoſe who were unbiaſſed. This was to be found out by the means that had been made uſe of to obtain their opinion; and again by the ſtile which they adopted in their Petitions; in the language which had been uſed by them, the one party had been infinitely more conſtitutional in their language than the other. By the way, the degree of comparative attention to be given to theſe Petitions, was not to be governed by the number of ſignatures to Petitions, but by what they knew of the circumſtances that had cauſed them. It was in that way the Houſe was to enquire how far theſe Petitions ſpoke the general ſenſe of the People. They ſhould enquire how

far

far theſe Petitions had been obtained by calumny, by fraud, by artifice, and by ſhameful and ſcandalous miſrepreſentations. By what he knew of the circumſtances; by the inflammatory language that had been held out at public meetings, he was at liberty to judge of them by that language, which language had indeed been reverberated in the Petitions themſelves. The Houſe would then judge whether it was poſſible for the people who had agreed to theſe Petitions to have agreed to them through a falſe medium. Without entering into the diſcuſſion now, he muſt beg of Gentlemen not to be too ready to take it for granted, that what the Houſe had heard to-day was to be conſidered as the ſenſe of the people; which concluſion would be as as much out of truth, as theſe Gentlemen had been out of the courſe of fair dealing in procuring theſe Petitions. Under that ſtate of the circumſtances he had a fair ground to come to this diſcuſſion; and he was anxious it ſhould be diſcuſſed on the queſtion of the Speaker leaving the Chair after the Call of the Houſe, and to diſcuſs the ſubject in the way Gentlemen had found out lately they could diſcuſs them; for, he obſerved, that, when the queſtion of the ſecond reading of one of the Bills was propoſed, they declined it, and reſerved themſelves, as they ſaid, for the Committee; although, when they moved for the Call of the Houſe, they alleged it would be almoſt Treaſon to the Conſtitution not to oppoſe the Bills in every ſtage. He mentioned theſe things collaterally to ſhew that the end of theſe Gentlemen was nothing but delay. For the reaſons he had given he wiſhed to avoid delay; and, becauſe they could not too ſoon decide whether theſe Bills were for the extinction of Liberty or for the ſalvation of the Conſtitution, he ſhould wiſh to bring forward the diſcuſſion as early as poſſible. He could not at this hour go into either of the Bills: he therefore gave notice that, on Wedneſday, he purpoſed going into a Committee of the Bill that was to be committed as of this day; and that, after the Call to-morrow, he ſhould propoſe to go into the Bill againſt Seditious Meetings.

Mr. Grey ſaid, after the humiliating and mortifying ſtate to which the Right Honourable Gentleman's meaſures had brought him in the eyes of the country, and particularly after what had paſſed that night, he was no ways ſurpriſed that the Honourable Gentleman had ſpoken in that high tone which he was ſo fond of indulging in, whenever he knew that he had the worſt ſide of the argument to ſupport. When he had recourſe, however, to his recollection, he ought to beware of miſrepreſenting what had occurred upon former occaſions. He conceived that part of the Honourable Gentleman's obſervations were directed particularly at

him,

him, when on a former night it had been ſtated, that by the Call of the Houſe taking place, every Gentleman would have it in his power to deliver his ſentiments on the third reading of the Bill. He had acquieſced in that idea, but at the ſame time never gave up the intention of watching and debating on every ſtage of the Bill, inſtead of confining the debate to the ſecond or third reading, or to any one particular ſtage. The Honourable Gentleman had aſked, though not with any degree of candour, why thoſe on the ſame ſide of the Houſe with him had not choſen to debate the principle of the Bill upon the ſecond reading? The reaſon why he did not debate it that day was ſo fairly and diſtinctly ſtated at the time, that he was ſurpriſed that ſuch a want of candour on the part of the Honourable Gentleman made it neceſſary for him to re-ſtate them now: they were, that the debate had been poſtponed that day from the unavoidable abſence of two Honourable Friends of his (Meſſrs. Erſkine and Sheridan) and not from any deſire to avoid diſcuſſion of the principle of the Bill. It had been ſaid that delay in proceeding on this Bill was his object, and that of his friends; for his own part, he avowed that in one ſenſe it certainly was his object, becauſe he muſt think that every delay that could be given to ſuch a Bill, was ſo much done for the good of the People of England. He denied, in the moſt unequivocal terms, the charge of miſrepreſentation brought againſt him and his friends, and could retort it with much greater truth upon the Honourable Gentleman. At the ſame time that he avowed delay to be an object with him, he muſt declare upon his honour that it was not the object of that night's debate, nor had he the leaſt previous knowledge of ſuch a diſcuſſion coming on. But if any exertions of his could delay the paſſing of theſe Bills for a day, he muſt take to himſelf the credit of gaining a day for his countrymen in the enjoyment of their rights and liberties, and if the queſtion was again brought on to-morrow, ſo much was he of this opinion, that he truſted ſomebody would move an adjournment upon it.

On the ſubject of miſrepreſentation without doors, he could further add, that he and his friends never held language againſt the Bills out of doors, different from what they had ſpoke within; they had always ſaid what they would perſiſt in ſaying when and wherever they had an opportunity, that it was a moſt daring invaſion on the liberties of the people, and a groſs violation of the Bill of Rights. And notwithſtanding the Honourable Gentleman's high tone and great hurry about getting theſe Bills paſſed, he would tell him to his face, that he knew he would not dare to paſs them as they now were; he could not do it; the Houſe never would allow

it. The country never would ſubmit to it. The Honourable Gentleman wiſhed the Bill to go into a Committee, that the moſt obnoxious parts of it may be left out; and feeling the horror which the appearance of this Bill had excited in that Houſe, and the diſmay and diſcontent it had rouſed without doors, he now came forward deſiring the Houſe to wait till it had gone through the Committee, till all thoſe abominable clauſes were ſtruck out of the Bill, and then he will tell them that all that had been ſaid of it was miſrepreſentation. He could pledge himſelf to the Houſe and to the country, that this would be the caſe; but that Gentlemen would not be ſeduced by ſuch arts, nor duped by ſuch fallacy. This was the ſort of miſrepreſentation which the Honourable Gentleman was guilty of, though he had not courage to acknowledge the truth, and the loud tones of the Honourable Gentleman convinced him he was right in ſaying ſo, as he had always heard him talk in his higheſt ſtrains, when leaſt ſupported by truth or argument. He had known him too long to be unacquainted with his ways, and now he was ſure the public had found him out too, and whatever alterations the Bill might undergo, the Committee ought not, and would not, let them be aſcribed to his wiſdom, but to the ſpirit of the people, who being rouſed by the alarming apprehenſions which his ſyſtem threatened them with, had determined no longer to be blind or dormant, when every thing that was dear to them was at ſtake.

Mr. Wilberforce ſaid, that he conceived the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt had given more indulgence to his perſonal feelings than to any feeling for the good of the country. He approved of the Bills, and would vote for them even in their preſent ſhape; he would, however, agree, that they might be altered or modified ſo as to give more general ſatisfaction; but he truſted that no alteration would be made in them that tended in any degree to weaken the object for which they were framed. He was fully convinced of the neceſſity of ſuch meaſures; as he knew the danger to be great and imminent, he truſted an adequate remedy would be applied.

Mr. Curwen ſaid, he was not ſurpriſed at the heat and intemperance of the Right Honourable Gentleman's language that night, becauſe he certainly muſt have felt very ſevere mortification from the failure of one of the great objects againſt the rights and liberties of the people. He wiſhed no doubt to go into the Committee, and ſtrike out the moſt obnoxious parts of the Bill, merely to quiet the country, now under a very ſerious and well-founded alarm; but his favourite ſyſtem of encroaching upon the rights of the people

ple, and overturning the Conſtitution of the country, was too deeply rooted in his heart, for any man who knew him to ſuppoſe that his machinations would ſtop here. He was aware of this ſyſtem, and had warned him and the country againſt it when the Traiterous Correſpondence Bill was brought in; upon that occaſion, and from all that had happened ſince, the Right Honourable Gentleman had, in his mind, completely forfeited the confidence of the country. With regard to the Bill, he had diſſeminated it over all parts of the country as much as he could, becauſe he wiſhed it to be known, and the real opinion of the people known upon it. For his part he was ſorry for the motion that had been made; he wiſhed that at leaſt one week had been given to collect the opinions of the people, as far as might be in that time; not that he ſuppoſed the delay would produce any argument in that Houſe that would perſuade the Miniſter to forego his projects, but that the ſenſe of the country might be known. He wiſhed the more to aſk this delay, becauſe a Right Honourable Secretary of State, whom he did not ſee in his place to-night, but hoped would be preſent to-morrow, had ſaid boldly, in a plain, manly manner, that if this Bill ſhould not be found to meet the wiſhes of the country, let it be withdrawn. In this he would join iſſue with his Majeſty's Miniſters, and ſay, if it meets the wiſhes of the people, in the name of God let them have it; but be ſure that it does meet their wiſhes firſt; let it not be hurried through the Houſe with ſuch velocity as if it was of no more importance than a turnpike Bill. He ſcorned the charge of miſrepreſentation, and would be as loath to uſe it againſt even the preſent Miniſters as any men, though he had the ſtrongeſt reaſons for thinking that from the firſt period of their adminiſtration the country was in danger from their ſyſtem, and that the continuance of their adminiſtration, which he feared was not yet near an end, was the greateſt calamity that could happen to the country.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, That the order of the day for the Committee upon a Bill for the greater Security of his Majeſty's Perſon, &c. be diſcharged. He then moved that the Committee be appointed for Wedneſday, the 25th.

Mr. Fox roſe, he ſaid, to move an amendment, That it be adjourned to Tueſday ſen'night. His argument for this was, that a Bill of ſuch importance ſhould not be hurried through the Houſe with more rapidity than a common turnpike Bill. It was ſaid that miſrepreſentation of the Bill had gone forth among thoſe who oppoſed it; ſurely then the way to do away miſrepreſentation, was to give the people time for examination. If he could believe it poſ-

ſible

ſible that the people of this country were ſo prepared for ſlavery as to countenance with any thing like their approbation theſe Bills—if they did not ſo generally expreſs their abhorrence of them, as to ſhew that they yet retained attachment to the Conſtitution of their anceſtors, he muſt only ſay, that he could no longer be a profitable ſervant of the people. He might ſit down in ſilence, and enjoy in the tranquillity of private life the ſociety of his friends, but he could not, with the feelings he poſſeſſed, be a profitable ſervant of the people: but if, on the contrary, the people of England were, as he truly believed them to be, againſt theſe Bills; not a mere concerted majority, but the great maſs of the people againſt them; then undoubtedly they had a right to demand his ſervices, and he ſhould obey the call. He had a right to hope and to expect that Bills which poſitively repealed the Bill of Rights, and which cut up by the roots the whole of the Conſtitution, by changing our limited Monarchy into an abſolute Deſpotiſm, would not be enacted by Parliament againſt the declared ſenſe of the great majority of the people. If, however, Miniſters ſhould be ſo reſolute on their ſpirit of deſtruction, as by means of the corrupt influence which they poſſeſſed in the two Houſes of Parliament, to paſs theſe Bills in violent oppoſition to the declared ſenſe of the people, and they were put into force, and became a practical part of the Government, he was ready to avow, in the ancient language of the Conſtitution, and in the principles of the Revolution, that however he might go into ſolitude to ſuffer his new condition with patience, if his opinion were aſked by the people as to their obedience, he ſhould ſay that it was no longer a queſtion of morality and duty, but of prudence. It would be a caſe of extremity which would juſtify reſiſtance, and the only queſtion would be whether that reſiſtance was prudent. He was aware that theſe words were liable to miſconſtruction, and he knew that Miniſters were adepts in the art; but a public man muſt not ſhrink in times of danger from ſtrong expreſſions becauſe they might be miſconſtrued. What he ſaid, he ſaid deliberately, and it was for the authors and abettors of this Bill to conſider whether they would hurry the Parliament to the paſſing of theſe Bills, before it could be aſcertained whether they had the ſenſe of the people with them or not. As to the amendments, they could be made in the Committee; he repeated what he had ſaid before on the ſubject—that no mending could qualify this attack on the Conſtitution. The poiſon might be covered—it might be made more palatable—and it would be ſo much the worſe. He deſired, if the Conſtitution was to be violated, that the people might ſee the attack in all its glaring, open treaſon, that they might be

be roufed to its defence. He certainly therefore fhould not lend himfelf to qualify the atrocious wickednefs of thefe Bills.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER faid, he did not rife to follow the Right Honourable Gentleman through the whole of his fpeech; but there were fome paffages in it which, confiftently with his duty as a Member of Parliament, with his feelings as a man, with his attachment to his Sovereign, and his veneration for the Conftitution, he could not hear, without rifing inftantly to exprefs his horror and indignation at them. The Right Honourable Gentleman, he obferved, had made a bold, broad, and unqualified declaration, that if his arguments and his meafures did not prevent the paffing of Bills, which a great majority of the Houfe conceived to be neceffary for the fecurity of the perfon of the Sovereign, and the prefervation of the Rights of the People, he will have recourfe to different means of oppofition. He has avowed his intention of fetting up his own arguments in oppofition to the authority of the Legiflature. He has faid, that if he is afked his advice, he will put the propriety of refiftance only on the queftion of prudence; without adverting whether the confequences of this advice may be followed by the penalties of treafon, and the danger of convulfion, thus openly advifing an appeal to the fword, which muft either confign its authors to the vengeance of the violated law, or involve the country in anarchy and bloodfhed. The Right Honourable Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer faid, had taken care not to be miftated; happily for the country, this declaration of his principles was too clear to admit of a doubt. He moved to poftpone the Committee until Wednefday, December 2. With all the horror he felt at fuch language, he was glad the Right Honourable Gentleman had been fo unreferved and explicit. The Houfe and the country would judge of that Gentleman's conduct from his own language; they might fee the extent of his veneration for the Conftitution, and of his refpect for Parliament, when, in violation of his duty, in defiance of legal punifhment, he could bring himfelf to utter fuch fentiments. He was glad the Right Honourable Gentleman had made that avowal, becaufe he hoped it would warn all the true friends of the Conftitution to rally round it for its defence. He would not enter into a difcuffion of the abftract right of refiftance, or what degree of oppreffion on the part of the Government, would fet the people free from their allegiance; he would only call to their recollection that the principles of thofe Bills, upon which the Right Honourable Gentleman had ventured fuch language, had met with the approbation of a large majority of the Houfe, and he trufted that majority had not forgot what was

due to themſelves and their country. He hoped they would ſhew the Right Honourable Gentleman, that they had not loſt the ſpirit of their anceſtors, which had been ſo frequently referred to; and that if they were driven by treaſon to the hard neceſſity of defending the Conſtitution by force, they would act with that irreſiſtible energy which ſuch a crime would neceſſarily excite in a loyal aſſembly. The power of the law of England, he truſted, would be ſufficient to defeat the machinations of all who riſqued ſuch dangerous doctrines, and to puniſh treaſon wherever it might be found. Should the law fail, all true friends to the Conſtitution muſt fight under its banner, and ſhew as much vigour in a good cauſe as deſperate men could do in a bad one. They muſt hazard, if neceſſary, their lives, their fortunes, and every thing held dear, to reſcue themſelves from that anarchy, that wretchedneſs, into which ſuch unremitting efforts were made to plunge the country.

Mr. Fox ſaid in explanation, the Right Hon. Gentleman's talent for miſrepreſentation was neither unknown to him nor to the Houſe; I riſe to re-ſtate my expreſſion, but not to retract one word of what I have ſaid. Let the words be taken down at the table; if they expreſs the ſentiments of an honeſt Engliſhman, they are thoſe ſentiments for which our forefathers ſhed their blood, and upon which the Revolution was founded: but let me not be miſtaken. The caſe I put was, that theſe Bills might be paſſed by a corrupt majority of Parliament, contrary to the opinion and ſentiments of the great body of the nation. If the majority of the People approve of theſe Bills, I will not be the perſon to inflame their minds, and ſtir them up to rebellion; but if, in the general opinion of the country, it is conceived that theſe Bills attack the fundamental principles of our Conſtitution, I then maintain, that the propriety of reſiſtance, inſtead of remaining any longer a queſtion of morality, will become merely a queſtion of prudence. I may be told that theſe are ſtrong words; but ſtrong meaſures require ſtrong words. I will not ſubmit to arbitrary power, while there remains any alternative to vindicate my freedom.

The Secretary at War ſaid, the explanation took nothing from the dangerous tendency of the original declaration. The meaning was obviouſly that which had been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was, that the Right Hon. Gentleman would adviſe the people, whenever they were ſtrong enough, to reſiſt the execution of the law. The Right Hon. Gentleman reſted on no majority, but the *majority* of *force*. The Hon. Gentleman had brought the matter to a criſis; and it was now verging to that point to which, in his opinion, it had long tended. It was

alarming to the country, but they muſt ſee it: the danger ought to be known to them; and if they did not ſee the dreadful precipice near which they ſtood, in his opinion they were loſt for ever. At leaſt they had a fair warning: they now knew from the unequivocal declarations of the Hon. Gentleman, what lengths would be juſtified; they had time to prepare againſt the danger, and prepare for their ſafety; but he would not wiſh for a diſhonourable ſafety; not one gained by flight and puſillanimity, but in manly fortitude to meet the danger. In that caſe, the Right Hon. Gentleman would find that Miniſters were determined to exert a vigour more than law. (A loud cry of *Hear! Hear!* and " *take down his words*") Mr. Windham repeated the words, " that they were ready to exert a *vigour* more than *law*," as exerciſed in ordinary times and under common circumſtances. Times and circumſtances would then require ſtronger laws, and the exertion of more efficacious means to put thoſe laws in execution. He deprecated the idea of an *abject mind* as much as the Right Hon. Gentleman; and therefore it was that Miniſters, whatever ſtrength and daring was oppoſed to them, would be able, he truſted, to meet it with an equal degree of ſtrength and combination.

Mr. Hardinge ſaid, that he agreed with Mr. Fox, and was ready then as he could ever be to vote a cenſure of the words, but that he was deſirous of the adjournment propoſed by the Maſter of the Rolls, and for two reaſons. Firſt, becauſe it was not of ſuch preſſure to act immediately in judgment upon this libel, as it was to act immediately upon the Bill for the Safety of the King's Perſon; and in the next place, becauſe he was perfectly ſure *the words* had received no explanation that could alter the ſenſe of them, or make it leſs criminal. It would be another queſtion whether cenſure was due to the *writer of them*, or how far it ſhould extend; and it was neceſſary to determine that queſtion by a more accurate examination of the whole work. This was a reaſon for *ſome* adjournment, and what he had ſaid before convinced him that it ſhould be diſtant enough to let in the diſcuſſion of the Bill that was the Order of the Day.

Mr. Alderman Newnham ſaid, that gentlemen ſeemed to take it for granted, that at the Public Meetings alluded to by the Right Hon. Gentleman who had ſpoken laſt but one, nothing but cool deliberate diſcuſſion had taken place at each of them; the direct reverſe had been the caſe moſt notoriouſly. With reſpect to the Common Hall, the crowd was ſo great, and the clamour ſo inceſſant, that it was utterly impoſſible to decide what were the ſentiments of the majority. Many had aſſented to the proceedings without

without ever even knowing what the refolutions were for which they voted. Guildhall, it was well known, was a long and extenfive building; his voice could not reach above half its extent; and when he attempted to fpeak, they would not hear him; nay, even his own conftituents would not hear Mr. Lufhington, who was fo able a fpeaker. The fame riotous conduct, he faid, had likewife taken place at the Middlefex Meeting, where one of the Reprefentatives of the County (Mr. Mainwaring) had to complain of a fimilar want of attention.

Mr. Sheridan faid, he could refer the worthy Alderman for an anfwer to the Right Hon. Gentleman, who, in 1784, had ftated to his Right Hon. Friend what muft be his fituation of degradation with regard to his conftituents, when they refufed to liften to his fentiments. After what had fallen from the Hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer, he declared he had imagined that nothing more violent could be added, until he heard the ftill more fiery ftyle of his Hon. Colleague. That a vigour more than the law muft be ufed, and that fuch was the declaration of his Majefty's Secretary at War, was a matter truly alarming to the people. He, who had made the metropolis of England a garrifon town, and filled it in all quarters with cavalry: the foldiers, under his exprefs orders, lying with their horfes ready faddled, and their feet almoft ready to mount the ftirrup. Where were the fymptoms of infurrection to warrant all this military array? The freedom of Parliament itfelf appeared to him to be threatened, and poffibly they might foon be deprived of the liberty of fpeech in that Houfe. What had his Honourable Friend faid? His explanation was bold, manly, and candid; they ought to have known, from his general character, that fuch it would be. He never attempted to fneak out of his declarations by paltry equivocations. He had faid, that if the people of England were dead to all their former feelings, if they wifhed for thefe Bills, then he fhould deem himfelf no longer a fit fervant for fuch a people: a declaration that was needlefs; they muft know, the frame and texture of his mind could never fuffer him to be the fervant of flaves; and degrading as the term was, fuch muft be their condition if thefe Bills paffed into laws. Mr. Sheridan declared, he acceded to all that had been faid by his Hon. Friend, and thought, as honourable men, they could not act otherwife. If the people were to afk how they were to act, if thefe Bills pafs by corrupt majorities, he fhould tell them, they ought to refift whenever they could prudently do it. As men of fpirit could they act otherwife? The people would fay, "you, by your language in the Houfe, have *inflamed* us; (a loud call of *Hear! Hear!*) and now

now you do not dare to purfue the meafures you there maintained."

That the Conftitution fhould be permanent was his firft and moft anxious defire; he did not wifh to fee a Britifh Robefpierre treading on the necks of the Britifh people. The refemblance, he remarked, was too fhocking to be overlooked. Robefpierre, to maintain his authority, kept the people in inceffant alarm about plots and confpiracies, which again were neceffary to him to bind the nation in ftronger fhackles. Robefpierre could not vifit the Mayor of Paris without his body guard; and Robefpierre put the whole country under military execution, all under the pretext of fecurity to the Conftitution. The tyrant, however, could not long practife thefe arts with impunity. A whole people could not long endure a flavery fo deteftable from a hand fo worthlefs. To the declaration of his Right Hon. Friend he therefore implicitly fubfcribed. It muft be the feeling of every true Englifhman; of every man who acknowledged the principles which had feated the illuftrious family of Brunfwick on the Throne.

Mr. Wilberforce faid, fuch declarations were liable to very different conftructions, he could not therefore but exprefs his difapprobation of them. Some might fuppofe they wifhed only to fupport Minifters, without any regard to the intereft of the nation. They had before heard of receffion from Parliament, and attacks upon the Conftitution; it was a fort of parliamentary language not to be underftood in its literal fenfe, but was well underftood by the country. What he rofe for, was to remark upon the notice given by the Honourable Gentleman for a motion for Peace. With peace in their mouths, what had they in their hearts, when their tone went to draw the *fword of civil difcord, in order to plunge it in the bofom of their own country?*

Mr. Grey faid, the world would judge of the fincerity of Mr. Wilberforce's wifh for peace. Of the fincerity of his own conduct, and of thofe with whom he acted, the country, he hoped, would not form a judgment from fuch invidious reflections as had been thrown out. From the principle which had been maintained by his Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Fox) he would not fhrink; and he would repeat with him, that if, by the Government of the country, meafures were carried into effect contrary to the wifhes of a great majority of the people, to the liberties of the nation, if he fhould be afked, whether the people ought to refrain from refiftance, he would fay, that they only fhould induce them to refrain from motives of prudence. With refpect to the Bills themfelves, he concurred entirely with his Right Honourable Friend, that no modi-

modification could make them otherwiſe than hoſtile to the principles of the Conſtitution.

COLONEL ROLLE read an Addreſs from Devon, which he ſaid contained his own ſentiments.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER moved to adjourn the Commitment of the Bill to Wedneſday. Adjourned.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

TO THE PARLIAMENT AND PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN.

AN EXPLICIT DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPLES AND VIEWS OF THE LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

THE London Correſponding Society feeling the awful importance of the ſituation in which their own efforts in behalf of liberty, and the arbitrary meaſures of an encroaching Adminiſtration have conſpired to place them—feeling alſo that the affairs of this long harraſſed and diſtracted nation have arrived at a moſt momentous criſis—that the people and their oppreſſors are at iſſue, and that there is now but one alternative, Liberty and Reform, or Encroachment and abſolute Deſpotiſm—conceive themſelves called upon, once more, to appeal to that public, ſo frequently warned by them, and deluded by their calumniators; and to ſtate in the moſt clear and explicit terms the following Declaration of their Principles.

I. This Society is, and ever has been, moſt firmly attached to the principles of Equality, accurately defined and properly underſtood; but, at the ſame time, they regard with the utmoſt abhorrence the baſe miſrepreſentations, to which, for intereſted purpoſes, theſe principles have been ſubjected.

Social equality, according to its juſt definition, appears to them to conſiſt in the following things:

1. The acknowledgment of equal rights.
2. The exiſtence of equal laws for the ſecurity of thoſe rights.
3. Equal and actual repreſentation, by which, and which alone, the invaſion of thoſe laws can be prevented; and ſuch an adminiſtration of thoſe laws inſured, as will alike preſerve the poor from the inſults and oppreſſions of the rich, and the rich from the inſults and invaſions of the poor.

In their ideas of equality, they have never included, [nor, till the aſſociations of alarmiſts broached the frantic notion, could they ever have conceived that ſo wild and deteſtable a ſentiment could have entered the brain of man] as the equalization of property, or the invaſion of perſonal rights and poſſeſſions. This levelling ſyſtem they know, and all rational men muſt immediately perceive, to be equally unjuſt and impracticable; and they are ready to a man, not only to proteſt againſt, but to oppoſe, with their lives, every attempt of that deſcription—attempts which they are well aware, inſtead of equalizing the condition of mankind, could only transfer property from its preſent poſſeſſors to plunderers and aſſaſſins of the moſt profligate deſcription, and ſubject the nation to the brutal and ferocious tyranny of the moſt ignorant and moſt worthleſs of mankind.

 II. With

II. With respect to particular forms and modifications of Government, this Society conceive, and ever have conceived, that the disputes and contentions about these which have so often distracted the universe [like biggotted attachments to particular forms of worship] are marks only of weak and inconsiderate minds, that in the pursuit of fleeting shadows forget the substance. Their attention has been uniformly addressed to more essential objects—to the peace—the social order—and the happiness of mankind; and these they have always been ready to acknowledge and believe might be sufficiently secured by the *genuine spirit* of the British Constitution. They have laboured therefore, with incessant application, not to *overthrow* but to *restore* and *realize* that Constitution; to give practical effect to those excellencies which have been theoretically acknowledged; and to reform those corruptions and abuses which, though some have attempted to justify, no one has had the hardihood to deny.

Peaceful reform, and not tumultuary revolt, is their object; and they trust to the good sense and candour of the Nation that something more than *vague accusation* and *interested calumny* will be expected to discredit their protestation, that *They abhor alike the* FANATICAL ENTHUSIASM *that would plunge into a sea of anarchy in quest of speculative theories, and the* VILLANOUS HYPOCRISY *that would destroy the very essence of existing institutions, under pretence of preserving them from destruction!!!*

III. This Society have always cherished, and will ever be desirous to inculcate, the most decided abhorrence of all tumult and violence. Anxious to promote the *happiness*, and therefore jealous of the *rights* of Man, they have never failed to propagate, nor to practise, the constitutional doctrine of opposing, by every peaceful and rational exertion, the encroachments of power and corruption. But they have never countenanced, nor ever will, any motion, measure or sentiment tending to excite commotion—to inflame the mind with sanguinary enthusiasm—or to extinguish the emotions of tenderness and humanity which ought particularly to characterise a free and enlightened nation.

At the same time, they do not wish to be understood as giving, by this declaration, any sort of countenance to the *detestable and delusive doctrines of Passive Obedience and Non-resistance*. This is a system which none but *hypocrites* will *profess*, and none but *slaves* will *practise*. The LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY are neither the former, nor the latter; and on the altar of their own hearts they have sworn—That *no insolent encroachments of a corrupt and tyrannical Administration---no dread of the last fatal arbitriment, shall ever compel them to be either!* They know that they have rights—they know that it is their duty to defend them—they know also, that to profess implicit submission is to invite oppression; and that to practise it is treason to posterity, and sacrilege against nature.

To resist oppression [when no other means are left] even with the same arms with which it is enforced, is, they are aware, not only a natural right, but a constitutional duty; and if their ancestors had not so resisted, the HOUSE of BRUNSWICK never would have swayed the British Sceptre, the exiled family of the STUARTS would have been still upon the throne, and Britain never could have boasted her GLORIOUS REVOLUTION of 1688.

But resistance of oppression, and promotion of tumult, are, in their minds, distinct propositions.

The

The former they *profeſs* as ſolemnly as they *abjure* the latter; and they truſt that the nation at large is equally ſenſible of the diſtinction; and that *if the dire neceſſity ever ſhould arrive, when the liberties of Britain muſt be aſſerted not by the voice and the pen, but by the ſword, Britains will rally round the ſtandard of Liberty, not like a band of depredators and aſſaſſins, but like a Spartan Phalanx; prepared and reſolved, to a man, rather to die at their poſts, than to abandon their principles, and betray the Liberties of their country!!!*

J. ASHLEY, Secretary.

Committee Room, Beaufort Buildings, Nov. 23, 1795.

ST. CLEMENT DANES AND ST. MARY-LE-STRAND.

AT a Meeting of ſeveral reſpectable Inhabitants of theſe Pariſhes, on Saturday the 21ſt inſt.

FRANCIS PLOWDEN, Eſq. in the Chair,

A hand-bill having been read, ſigned by 15 Inhabitants (only) of the Pariſh of St. Clement Danes, ſtating, that an Addreſs on the late outrage upon his Majeſty, and a Petition to the Houſe of Commons in conſequence of that event, lies for ſignatures at the Veſtry-room, in St. Clement's church-yard, without mentioning the purport or object of the Petition, but which appears to be in ſupport of the two Bills now before Parliament, threatening the overthrow of the liberties of the people of England,

Reſolved, That a General Meeting of the Inhabitants of theſe Pariſhes be called, on Wedneſday next the 25th inſt. at Twelve o'clock preciſely, at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand, to take into conſideration ſuch Bills, and to ſupport the Petition moved by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, on Monday laſt, in Palace-yard.

CASTLE BAYNARD WARD, Nov. 24, 1795.

AT a Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Ward, aſſembled in the Pariſh Church of St. Mary Magdalen and St Gregory, in purſuance of public notice and advertiſement,

ROBERT SLADE, Eſq. (one of the Common Council of the Ward,) in the Chair,

The following Reſolutions were agreed to, viz.

Reſolved, That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that it is expedient to preſent a Petition to the Houſe of Commons, praying, that they would not paſs into Laws two Bills, now depending in their Honourable Houſe, intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies,"—And, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts."

Reſolved, That the Petition now produced and read, be the Petition to be preſented, and that the ſame, after being ſigned by the perſons preſent, do lie at the Horn Tavern in Doctor's Commons, during to-morrow, for the ſignatures of ſuch other Inhabitants of this Ward, as ſhall approve thereof.

Reſolved, That Thomas Champion Creſpigny, Eſq. M. P. and an Inhabitant of this Ward, be requeſted to preſent the ſaid Petition.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Minority of both Houſes of Parliament, who, by their patriotic oppoſition to the ſaid Bills,

Bills, have called the attention of their countrymen to a ſubject connected with their moſt valuable intereſts.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Griffith and Mr. Howell, two of the Common Council of this Ward, for the oppoſition by them given in the Court of Common Council, on the queſtion there agitated reſpecting the ſaid Bills.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the gentlemen who ſigned the requiſition to Sir John Hopkins, Knight, Alderman of this Ward, for convening the Inhabitants thereof, and who, on his refuſal called the preſent Meeting.

Reſolved, That theſe Reſolutions be ſigned by the Chairman, and publiſhed in the daily Papers.

ROBERT SLADE, Chairman.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his able and impartial conduct in the Chair.

EXETER, Nov. 19, 1795.

A MINISTERIAL manœuvre was yeſterday played off at the Caſtle here, with the uſual ſucceſs. A Meeting of the County had been called for that day, by requiſition to the Sheriff, for the purpoſe of addreſſing his Majeſty on his late happy deliverance. Every one concurring in this object, and thinking the Addreſs muſt paſs unanimouſly, the Meeting was but thinly attended.

No further buſineſs was ſpecified in the requiſition, nor expected to be brought forward. When the Addreſs was produced, there appeared in it a clauſe tending to encourage the Legiſlature to paſs the Bills now under their conſideration, which reſtrain the liberty of the ſubject; this clauſe was oppoſed, as foreign to the purpoſe of the meeting, and to the notice given, but this was over-ruled by the party who brought in the Addreſs, at the ſame time that they negatived a motion for introducing a clauſe to recommend the concluſion of peace on the very ſame ground.

The Addreſs is gone up as the ſenſe of the county of Devon. With how much truth, the above ſhort account will ſhew.

PAISLEY, Nov. 17.

AT a Meeting of the Merchants, Manufacturers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of this town and its ſuburbs, held here this day,

Mr. WM. CARLILE, Merchant, and late Baillie of Paiſley, in the Chair,

A Petition to the Houſe of Commons was reſolved and agreed upon, expreſſive of the abhorrence which the Petitioners feel at the outrage offered to his Majeſty, and at the two Bills now pending in Parliament.

"Anxious (the Petition ſays), for the peace of our country, and the good order of ſociety among us in theſe unſtable and dangerous times, we look forward with apprehenſion to the pent up diſſatisfaction of the people, and to the conſequences of the ſullen and awful ſilence which will enſue. Friends to the Government under which we and our fathers have lived in ſafety and comfort, we wiſh it to be eſtabliſhed not only by the laws, but in the hearts of the ſubjects, which we believe to be its firmeſt ſupport."

The Petition is ſigned by about 2500 perſons.

BRITISH

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

TUESDAY, NOV. 24.

THE CALL OF THE HOUSE

Occupied the attention of the Members from four till eight o'clock: While ſtrangers were excluded, ſeveral diviſions, or excuſes for abſence took place. At the commencement of this period,

MR. SHERIDAN ſtated the manner in which the Calls of the Houſe had lately been trifled with, and rendered almoſt nugatory; and the neceſſity, in the preſent momentous criſis, of ſtrictly enforcing the rule, however unpleaſant the taſk. He therefore moved, that the Houſe ſhould then be called over, and gave notice, that he ſhould move to repeat the Call after a ſhort interval.

A debate aroſe on a motion that the Houſe be called over that day fortnight, and an amendment being moved, that it be called over on Friday ſe'nnight, it was carried in favour of the Call on this day fortnight.

SIR WILLIAM DOLBEN roſe to make a remark on the ſubject of the Order of the Houſe. He ſaid, that the cry of *hear! hear!* had lately been ſo often and ſo loudly vociferated, that he was to a great degree prevented from hearing at all; he therefore hoped the Speaker would uſe his authority in maintaining more order in that reſpect in future.

MR. GREY preſented a Petition from Newcaſtle, againſt the Bills depending in the Houſe, ſigned, as he obſerved, by near 3000 perſons, and obtained in the moſt unexceptionable manner; he ſaid he underſtood, that an oppoſite Petition had been procured, by means which he knew to have been, in ſome inſtances, highly improper. One perſon in particular, who had ſigned the Petition for the Bills by miſtake, had, he underſtood, not been allowed to eraſe his name; he underſtood alſo that many others had likewiſe ſigned the wrong Petition.

MR. BRANDLING anſwered, he had received ſeveral letters, extracts from which he read, ſtating, that very unbecoming acts had been uſed in procuring the Petition againſt the Bills preſented by an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Grey); and he proceeded to read a Hand-bill, inviting the meeting, wherein it was ſtated that the County of Middleſex, the City of Weſtminſter, and the City of London, the Borough of Southwark, and all the Merchants,

Bankers, and Traders of London, with fcarcely an exception, had already fet the example to the country, of figning a Petition againft the Bills; the Hand-bill, neverthelefs, was dated and circulated in Newcaftle the very fame day on which the earlieft of the Petitions in or near the metropolis of which it made mention, was brought forward, and many days before the meeting in Middlefex took place.

Mr. Grey admitted there was fome anticipation in thus ftating the Petitions to have been already carried, which the writer undoubtedly ought only to have fpoken of as likely to be carried.

The Attorney General obferved, that the people of Newcaftle were not only mifinformed as to the fact which had been mentioned, but it appeared they were equally mifinformed as to the ftate of the exifting law of the country, and as to the enactments of the Bills againft which they petitioned.

Other Petitions were prefented, and Sir G. Shuckburgh having intimated that he did not wifh to prevent ftrangers being re-admitted into the gallery, after a few words from the Secretary at War, the gallery was opened.

Mr. Fox and the Chancellor of the Exchequer feverally agreed in the propriety and neceffity of this proceeding, and the Call accordingly took place. A moft unprecedented number of abfentees were fet down as defaulters, many of whom had fent no excufes whatever, or taken the leaft notice of the Call.

At eight o'clock ftrangers were admitted into the gallery; but fome noife being made, occafioned principally by the anxiety of perfons to obtain feats, as the avenues had been extremely crouded all the afternoon, Sir George Shuckburgh moved that the gallery fhould be cleared.

The Speaker ftated, that a motion of that nature having been made, it only remained for him to defire the Serjeant to clear the gallery. The gallery was accordingly cleared.

On the ftrangers being turned out, Mr. Sheridan vindicated them from any intention of difrefpect to the Houfe; ftated the great length of time they had been waiting in the lobby, and urged the ill appearance it would have at fuch a crifis, and when fuch a fubject was in difcuffion, to fhut themfelves up and exclude the public from even hearing their proceedings.

About half paft nine o'clock ftrangers were again admitted. At that time,

Mr. Church defended the proceedings of the meeting of the Freeholders of Middlefex convened at Hackney, than which, he faid, nothing could be more orderly and regular: as a proof of this affertion,

affertion, he defired to refer to the Members of the county, who were prefent.

Mr. Mainwaring faid, the meeting of the county of Middlefex had been convened in confequence of a requifition, figned by many refpectable characters, among whom were feveral of high rank. The novelty of the fpectacle of fo many Noblemen mingling in popular meetings had probably contributed to collect a great concourfe of people. Two noble Dukes, who were, he believed, not freeholders, had addreffed the meeting, and were heard with great attention. In attempting to fpeak upon the fubject of the meeting he had not been fo fortunate, having been repeatedly interrupted. He had endeavoured to ftate his difapprobation of two of the claufes in one of the Bills; but when he wifhed to exprefs his conviction of the propriety of fome fuch meafures, he was not allowed to proceed. Another Gentleman, who attended the meeting to oppofe the Petitions, was in the fame fituation; and there did not appear to him to be a candid difpofition to canvafs the bufinefs with fairnefs and impartiality.

Sir W. Milner declared he felt a confiderable degree of furprife, on hearing that the numerous attendance mentioned had been afcribed to the novelty of Peers and Members of Parliament appearing on fuch occafions, and was proceeding to ftate the great number of Peers, which he had known prefent at a county meeting, when

The Speaker reminded the Houfe, that this converfation was irrelevant to the queftion then before them.

The queftion before the Houfe was, Whether the Petition from the town of Newcaftle, againft the Bills now pending in Parliament, fhould lie on the table.

Mr. Byng faid, he was forry that he was precluded from replying to his Honourable colleague, had that not been the cafe, he declared he would have told him, that the Gentlemen who interrupted him during his fpeech at the meeting, were the very fame Gentlemen who had returned him to Parliament.

PETITION FROM THE MERCHANTS AND BANKERS.

Mr. Erskine faid, that he had in his hand a piece of parchment, which he would not ftyle a Petition, but, in compliance with a phrafe employed by an Honourable Gentleman, call a *fomething*. Mr. Erfkine was about to read the title of the Petition, but on opening the folds of parchment, found that he had taken up one which did not belong to him, which occafioned confiderable mirth.

mirth. Mr. Erſkine ſaid, that when the Houſe was beſet with Petitions, in greater number from from all quarters of the country than he had ever recollected to have been the caſe on any former occaſion, againſt Bills of ſo alarming and deſtructive a tendency, it was not ſurpriſing that he ſhould commit the miſtake. He had intended to preſent the Petition without any comment, or previous obſervation, thinking it the bounden duty of the Repreſentatives of the People to lay their complaints before Parliament; from the calumnious and invidious remarks which it was at this time cuſtomary to make on Petitions of a ſimilar nature, he however found it neceſſary to ſay ſomething. He had received it from the perſon whoſe name firſt appeared in the ſubſcription to it, and who had been Chairman of a meeting where it had been adopted, while ſuch meetings were yet lawful, or allowed to be held. It had already been anticipated in the courſe of the evening, that this perſon was neither in trade, nor a native of this country. With reſpect to theſe points, he could not take upon himſelf to decide. He knew the Gentleman was the brother of a moſt reſpectable perſon whom he had occaſion to know, and he had underſtood him to be his partner in trade. It had likewiſe been ſtated that this Petition could not be ſtyled the Petition of the Bankers of the City of London, as no individuals of that deſcription had ſubſcribed it. Whether this was the caſe or not, he could not tell, nor did he think that there was any particular honour or dignity annexed to the name of Banker, which could have led the Petitioners to aſſume it. He had firſt looked at the language of the Petition, in order to be informed whether the terms in which it was couched were proper and reſpectful to the Houſe, and ſuch as a Member of Parliament might preſent with credit, and he had found it in every way ſuitable to the dignity of the Houſe, and to the importance of the occaſion. It was ſigned by upwards of 2900 perſons.—— Upon his being aſked, what was the title of the Petition? he owned he had been ſtruck with ſome aſtoniſhment; and on his anſwering, that it was a Petition of the Merchants, Bankers, and others of the city of London, to be told the fact which had been inſinuated already againſt the Petition, and the perſons by whom it was ſubſcribed. He believed the character and the views of the Petitioners to be perfectly proper and conſtitutional. Mr. Waddington, the Chairman, to whom he had already alluded, had ſome months ſince, upon the rumour of a threatened invaſion, enrolled himſelf in the Southwark cavalry; and though nothing in his character afforded any thing like room for ſuſpicion, he had been diſmiſſed from the ſervice upon the ſingle circumſtance of having

ſigned

ſigned his name to an advertiſement, calling a meeting to conſider of the propriety of theſe Bills, which ſtrike, as he would contend, at the root of the Conſtitution. A fact like that argued in the ſtrongeſt manner the mean and odious jealouſy of the men by whom theſe corps were directed, of the conduct of thoſe who ſhew themſelves courageous enough to oppoſe the unconſtitutional meaſures, and afforded a reaſonable ground of belief, that perſons of ſuch ſentiments were carefully excluded conſidering the purpoſes to which they might be applied. He concluded with moving, "that this Petition of the Merchants, Bankers, and other Inhabitants of the City of London, be brought up."

ALDERMAN NEWNHAM ſaid, he meant no diſreſpect to the gentleman, whoſe name ſtood at the head of the ſubſcribers to the Petition, but he was convinced that the meeting did not ſpeak the ſenſe of the Merchants and Bankers of the city of London.

MR. ALDERMAN LUSHINGTON ſaid, he did not riſe to object to the Honourable Gentleman bringing up the Petition, nor was he unwilling to allow it all the weight it deſerved. The Honourable and learned Gentleman had undoubtedly acted conſtitutionally in preſenting the Petition; he felt himſelf bound, however, to remark on the unfair influence uſed to obtain it. Many of the perſons ſuppoſed to have ſigned it would, he ſaid, ſhortly petition for the Bills; and it would appear that the majority and far more reſpectable part of the merchants, bankers, manufacturers, as well as three-four hs of the houſeholders, took no part in this buſineſs. It was at all times wiſe to advert to general principles; he would aſk, therefore, whether the ſecurity and diſtribution of property not univerſal ſuffrage, the modern theory, did not form the baſe of the ſocial ſtate, and of the conſtitution of the country? Such at leaſt was the opinion of our anceſtors. If the general ſenſe of the nation was taken on the Bills, the Alderman ſaid, he was perſuaded that three-fourths of the people of property would be found to be favourable to them. Three-fourths of the deſcription of perſons ſaid to have ſigned the Petition, he had no doubt were of the ſame kind; and, he truſted, when the real Petition of the Bankers, &c. ſhould come forward, which it ſoon would, that it would have all the influence due to it.

SIR BENJAMIN HAMMET ſaid, the Petition could not be ſtated to be the Petition of the Bankers of London, as no Banker had been preſent at the Meeting; if the Petition was diſcovered not to have the real ſignatures of thoſe whoſe names it bore as ſubſcribers, the Houſe, he conceived, ought not to receive it. He declared himſelf warranted to aſſert, that the perſons who ſigned this had ſigned

ſigned other Petitions in different places. The fact undeniably was, that in the meeting where the Petition was agreed upon, every miſrepreſentation was uſed; and while the advocates for the preſent Petition argued for the liberty of the preſs and ſpeech, thoſe, who differed in opinion, were denied the liberty of ſpeaking there, though nobody had any perſonal diſlike to them. He imagined a Right Honourable Gentleman oppoſite to him meant well; but he was free to ſay, that if his ſtrong and ardent ſpeeches actuated and inflamed the public mind, he would not be able to oppoſe the progreſs of ſedition excited perhaps unintentionally by himſelf. Such was the caſe of Lord George Gordon in the year 1780. His Lordſhip himſelf told him (Sir Benjamin Hammet) that he could not reſtrain the fury of the mob. He wiſhed to warn the Right Honourable Gentleman againſt ſuch fatal conſequences. He was requeſted byhis conſtituents to preſent an humble Addreſs to his Majeſty, praying that ſome ſuch regulations might be made for the ſecurity of Monarchy and the Conſtitution. He was ſure the majority of the city were friendly to the Bills; and he hoped the Houſe would not receive the Petition before them as the ſenſe of the Bankers of London; as he was certain that not a ſingle Banker ſigned it.

Mr. Serjeant Adair ſaid, he would not diſcuſs the point whether the Petition was ſigned by the Bankers, Merchants, &c. of the city of London, from whom it was ſaid to come. It was enough for him, that it was the Petition of a great many of the inhabitants of London, who, whatever was their ſituation, were entitled to petition the legiſlature. He meant to advert to the obſervation of a learned gentleman, who ſaid that it had been obtained at a public meeting, while ſuch meetings were not illegal. No concluſion of that kind could juſtly be drawn from any meaſure depending at preſent in that Houſe. That circumſtance, however, was one of the miſrepreſentations which had been ſo frequent. Nothing could be more clear than that the pending Bills would not take away the right of petitioning, or aſſembling in ſuch meetings. He did not ſo much doubt whether the Petition expreſſed the true ſentiments of the Merchants and Bankers, &c. as of the perſons by whom it was ſigned, many of whom might have been deceived by the falſe account they received of the meaſures againſt which they remonſtrated. Such miſrepreſentations of the principle and intention of the Bills, he ſaid, he would never ſuffer to paſs without attempting to reſtrain and expoſe them.

Mr. Fox ſaid, ſeveral things had been obſerved and ſtated in the courſe of the debate, which ought not to go unnoticed. Inſinuations

tions against the conduct of noble Dukes appearing at public meetings, and the novelty of such behaviour had been thrown out. The Middlesex Meeting was not, he observed, the first instance in which Peers and Members of Parliament had taken a share in county meetings. In 1780, meetings of that sort had been frequent, and had proved highly useful. He was convinced by the influence and spirit they had excited, that they had tended to abridge, by at least one or two years, the duration of a cruel and impolitic war. Similar meetings had, on various occasions, been held, and he would defy any man to deny the advantages that had resulted from them to the country,

Alarms, it was asserted, had been spread concerning the tendency of the Bills at present pending in Parliament, and that these meetings were calculated to inflame and irritate the minds of the people against measures of no serious consequence to their liberties and the Constitution. Was it possible that he should forget the zeal and activity which had been exerted to spread alarms without doors concerning the tendency of his India Bill? One Gentleman [the Chancellor of the Exchequer] in arguing against that measure had boldly avowed, that he would employ every means in his power to spread alarm among the people; and, while he recollected the circumstance, it was with the utmost satisfaction he recollected the answer he then returned, that it was the duty of every member to explain to his constituents the nature of those measures, by which they were to be affected. In no situation in which he had been placed, had he forgot or ceased to respect the right of the subject to investigate public affairs, nor did he attempt to check that discussion, when it threatened to be unfavourable to the measures which he proposed, and which he was convinced were advantageous to the country. He declared, he considered it as a symptom of the decay of the principles of the Constitution, when, since the year 1780, such a revolution had taken place in the sentiments, and such an alteration in the language of gentlemen upon that important point.

With equal astonishment had he heard the attempts which had been made to detract from the weight of that almost universal public disapprobation by which the Bills had been condemned. It was roundly asserted that other petitions would come forward to counteract the influence of those already presented. Of that the House knew nothing; it was an absurd and ridiculous preference of speculation to facts which it was presumptuous to indulge. A worthy Alderman (Mr Lushington) had not only undertaken to answer for the Merchants and Bankers of London, and for his constituents, in

in contradiction to the positive vote of the Common Hall, but for three fourths of the Householders of the Kingdom. Where were the facts upon which this assertion rested? Were three-fourths of the Householders of Westminster for the Bills? Would the worthy Alderman tell him that the supporters of the Bills had appealed to the parochial meetings with more success than they had appealed to general meetings?

It was almost incredible, he said, that Gentlemen should blind, not merely their understanding against the reception of truth, but even against the testimony and demonstration of their senses. It indicated a perverseness of mind, which would hear and see, and judge of nothing that was unwelcome, and which in spite of the clearest evidence, doubted of every fact that was disagreeable. Will they tell me, said Mr. Fox, that three-fourths of the inhabitants of Westminster are not against these Bills, without contradicting my very senses?

But it was said, that the opposers of the Bills had been guilty of misrepresentation. Be it so for the sake of argument, said Mr. Fox. They tell us, that other Petitions will appear, and testify a different sense in the people. This, at least, was a powerful reason for delaying the progress of the Bills till these actually were brought forward. It had been said by a learned friend of his, Mr. Serjeant Adair, that these very Petitions did not speak the sense of those who signed them. This was at once, and without proof, to take up a particular case, instead of the general presumption. His learned friend, Mr. Serjeant Adair, had accused his learned friend near him of misrepresenting the scope of the Bills, when he said that such a meeting as that from which the Petition was presented could not take place where the Bill passed into a law. With the explanation he had repeatedly given, he would plead guilty to this accusation. He had stated, he said, that in such a meeting no matter could be discussed freely, or to any effect.

They might meet, no doubt, but for how long a time? No longer than till the Magistrate thought, or chose to appear to think that something improper had been done, on which he might disperse them, and prevent their coming to any resolution. It must be admitted therefore, that no misinterpretation had taken place; but that it was indubitably true that a meeting in such a situation is merely a nominal privilege, and the efficient importance or utility of it is entirely done away. With regard to the responsibility of the Magistrate, a difference of opinion certainly was entertained, but none as to his right of interference. Why then flatter or delude men with the idea that they have the right to meet and deli-

berate

berate, when its exercise depends on so precarious a circumstance as the virtue or the caprice of the superintending Magistrates? Was it ever contradicted that this was the case? Whatever might be the degree of responsibility, it was undoubted that the meeting might be dissolved. [Mr. Fox was proceeding, when he was called to order; and it was stated that the argument into which he had gone was irregular.]

Mr. Fox made an observation or two upon the call to order and then said, that he should not trouble the House farther than to declare, that if it had been supposed to have been literally stated by his Honourable and Learned Friend, that no meeting could be held in future, that supposition was certainly unfounded; but if it had been supposed to have been stated that no free meetings could be held in future, to that statement he pleaded guilty. The distinction was so frivolous, as to be wholly unworthy of any man of sense and understanding.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, anxious as he was to shorten preliminary discussion, that the debate might not be unnecessarily prolonged, and that the House might form themselves into a Committee to discuss, clause by clause, the serious provisions of the Bill, at which period he should call upon Gentlemen to shew how it could produce those dangerous consequences which had been attributed to it; yet when he heard the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Fox) address so much of his speech to him in particular, it was impossible for him to remain silent; more especially as it was evident that these preliminary discussions were intimately connected with the merits of the Bill. "The Right Honourable Gentleman says, that it is at present the subject of complaint, that he and his Friends are spreading an alarm, and at the same time he reminds me of a period (during the discussion of the East India Bill) when I wished to spread an alarm:" I desire, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, distinctly to state, that the ground of my complaint is, not that any Gentleman, who sees in the Bill what to him appears injurious to the liberties of this Country, should wish to arouse the attention and jealousy of his constituents; the complaint I have to make is, that any methods should be adopted to prevent the people of the Country from forming a fair and impartial judgment respecting these Bills, and from expressing their sense of them, as the result of this impartial examination. The charge I urge against the Gentlemen in opposition to these Bills is, first that the means they make use of for spreading an alarm is misrepresentation; and secondly, that this alarm-

ing of the people is attempted for the expreſs purpoſe of rouſing them, if practicable, to a ſpirit of reſiſtance againſt the legiſlature, with a view to overthrow the Acts of the King, Lords and Commons, in Parliament aſſembled; and inſtead of the peaceable and Conſtitutional means of petitioning, to encourage the People to reſort to force, a language which he believed no individual in this country had ever held before, and which the Right Honourable Gentleman had, at leaſt, intitled himſelf to the honour of having introduced into Parliament itſelf. Of this we complain; nor ſhall we ceaſe to complain, that thoſe Gentlemen who expreſs ſuch peculiar anxiety for the intereſts of the People, for the welfare of the Country, and ſuch a regard for the privileges of Parliament; that under pretence of attachment to Whig principles, they had affected to maintain thoſe doctrines which were juſtifiable only under extraordinary circumſtances, and to lay them down as eſtabliſhed maxims founded in truth and general wiſdom; becauſe our anceſtors had recourſe to reſiſtance to a King, who aimed at the overthrow of the National Religion, who attempted to govern without Parliaments altogether, who was in fact againſt all Law, and violated the Conſtitution of the Country; this reſiſtance they conſidered as a general rule of action, and in their imitation of the principle, were animating the People, not to an oppoſition of illegal and unconſtitutional exerciſe of prerogative, or a wanton diſregard of the laws, but to a reſiſtance of a Law, though legally ſanctioned by the conſent of the three branches of the Legiſlature. I defy theſe Gentlemen to ſhew the conſiſtency of ſuch conduct with the principles and practice of thoſe whom they profeſs to make the objects of their imitation. We alſo complain, that the alarms attempted to be raiſed have been by means of miſrepreſentation." This the Chancellor of the Exchequer exemplified in what had taken place at ſome of the meetings in the North of England, as well as near the Metropolis; alſo in the language put into the mouths of ſome of the Petitioners againſt the Bills. To induce the people of Newcaſtle to ſign the Petition againſt the Bill, it was affirmed that two other cities near the Metropolis had met, and came to ſimilar reſolutions, when in fact, the meeting was only about to be held in one, and no meeting had taken place in the other. A Gentleman had ſaid, that theſe places had ſince petitioned, which, though true, did not render the repreſentation leſs falſe at the time it was made.

Among

Among other extraordinary Petitions that had been procured, one had been brought up from the journeymen taylors of London; a Petition which expreſsly ſtated that the journeymen are under the neceſſity of applying to the Houſe againſt the Bills, becauſe, if they ſhould paſs into laws, it would make it illegal for them to meet on matters relative to their trade. This Petition was not leſs ridiculous than malicious; it was notorious that the Bills did not in any poſſible view extend to ſuch meetings; an evident inſtance of the manner in which this and other Petitions were procured. Similar miſrepreſentations had been employed to procure Petitions from bodies of men not in the ſmalleſt degree affected by the Bills. A large and induſtrious claſs of people in this metropolis, (the weavers,) a claſs with whom it was no light matter to tamper, had hand-bills diſtributed among them, to procure a Meeting, wherein the alarm was attempted to be given, that ſhould the Bills paſs, it would be illegal for them to meet for an increaſe of wages; he was happy to find that ſuch a baſe miſrepreſentation had proved unſucceſsful. It was notwithſtanding an inſtance of the wicked and dangerous arts uſed to irritate the public mind and to provoke the people to ſedition and treaſon.

Calumnies, he obſerved, had been induſtriouſly propagated in different parts of the country, ſtating that the Bills went to prohibit the meetings of private families, and that the Right Honourable Gentleman had oppoſed the Bills on that ground. In the original opening of the Bill, it was true he had curſorily ſtated, that one of the clauſes went to prohibit meetings called together by public advertiſement, for political diſcuſſions, without giving notice to a magiſtrate, if ſo many above the ſtated number of the family were preſent; that clauſe however it was propoſed to omit. To ſay that either of theſe Bills went to prevent private families from meeting, without giving ſuch a public advertiſement, was neither more nor leſs than a downright calumny. The diſcuſſions which the Bills had undergone had, in ſome meaſure, reſtrained that freedom of miſrepreſentation. He ſaid, however, that he had been informed that at the Meeting at Surry, it had been agreed, that a Meeting called by the Sheriff would have been illegal under the operation of the Bills, though the Meeting being called in that manner was a ſufficient anſwer to the obſervation.

In fact, ſcarcely a day had paſſed in which ſome one or other of the Gentlemen in oppoſition had not repreſented the Bill as a reſtraint upon the right of petitioning the Legiſlature: nay, they had gone farther, and ſtated it to be an *extinction* of the right of the ſubject to petition; although every man who had read the Bill muſt

ſee, that it allowed all the extent of petitioning by which our anceſtors were contented to make known their wiſhes or complaints to Parliament. Every Meeting convened by Lord Lieutenants, *cuſtodes rotulorum*, or magiſtrates, was exempted from the operations of this Bill, and others were ſimply put under certain regulations, and by no means pronounced illegal. He muſt obſerve, however, that ſelf-created Meetings were unknown to our anceſtors; Meetings which have endeavoured to propagate French revolutionary principles, formed upon the plans of the Jacobin Clubs, and adopting their very phraſes of Affiliated Societies, &c.

Another miſrepreſentation, he ſaid was, that in proportion to the diſcretionary power which the Bill would give to a magiſtrate, it was a direct invaſion of the right of the ſubject. When this clauſe came to be diſcuſſed in the Committee, it would be a matter of wiſdom to proceed with all due caution, and it might poſſibly be amended. He had been told by an Honourable Gentleman oppoſite, that he had known him long enough; he might ſay that the ſame length of time had afforded him an opportunity of alſo knowing the Honourable Gentleman, who perhaps inferred, that the eagerneſs with which he had defended the principle of the Bill, covered a wiſh to introduce ſome modifications in its clauſes. Was it, he aſked, to the diſcredit of any member, who brought in a Bill upon any matter of importance, that he either changed his opinion as to the propriety of ſome particular clauſes, or ſubmitted to the better judgment of others? When the Houſe went into a Committee on that clauſe, and were endeavouring to check ſocieties that might be dangerous to the Conſtitution, it would, he was ready to admit, be adviſeable to leave as little as poſſible to the diſcretion of the magiſtrate; even taking this diſcretionary power as it now ſtood, thoſe who had firſt brought in the Bill, propoſed to render the magiſtrate reſponſible for the exerciſe of it. He declared himſelf ready to meet the ſtatement of the Right Honourable Gentleman, that though the Bill did not *literally* deſtroy the privilege of holding Public Meetings, yet, in fact, it rendered the exerciſe of that right in a great degree abortive. This was an argument which went upon the aſſumption that there was no difference between the extinction of a right and the regulation of it. What might be conſidered as a ſecond edition of miſrepreſentation, he ſaid, had been manifeſted. A Learned Gentleman (Mr. Erſkine) had preſented a Petition, ſaid to come from the Merchants, Bankers, &c. of the City of London, which ſtated, that they petitioned the Houſe, *while they yet had the power*. He defyed the Learned Gentleman to point out one word in the Bill, by which

which ſuch a Petition could not be preſented or deemed illegal. Thus an alarm was pretended, where there was no ground to occaſion it. This was a Petition from *the Bankers*, &c. of London, as they called themſelves: if it ſhould turn out, that though they ſpeak in the name of *all* the Bankers, yet no one Banker is to be found in the liſt, what is this but another miſrepreſentation?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer next took notice of what had fallen from another Learned Gentlemen, (Serjeant Adair) though he agreed with him in the miſrepreſentation of the Learned Gentleman, (Mr. Erſkine), he could not agree with him, that if a Petition was ſtated to come from the Merchants and Bankers of the City, it made no difference whether it had or had not the ſignatures it ſet forth. It was a ſpecies of that miſrepreſentation which he was lately deprecating: and which he was free to ſay, had excited moſt of the Petitions againſt the Bills. He would aſk, what proof the Gentleman on the other ſide had to ſhew of the ſucceſs of their exertions, at a period when they ſaid liberty was at the laſt gaſp. From their common pretenſions he owned he had little confidence in their aſſertions. In ſpite of all their clamours, that the power of expoſing grievances or of oppoſing attacks was taken away, they would find it eaſy to employ the ſame artifices againſt any new meaſure to which their oppoſition ſhould be directed. The preſent Bill was repreſented worſe than the preceding, yet they ſtill preſerved the ſame perſeverance in oppoſition, and the ſame opportunity of miſrepreſentation. He wiſhed gentlemen to conſider the Bill clauſe by clauſe; and they would be forced to confeſs, that while they gave the magiſtrate every power of diſperſion by the Bills, they were carefully guarded, in order to preſerve the Conſtitution inviolate. Every man muſt ſee, that if the Meetings were not compelled to notify their aſſembling to the magiſtrate, the regulation could not apply to them. He concluded by ſaying, that if gentlemen conſidered his arguments, they would ſee that he proved diſtinctly that the aſſertions of oppoſition were the groſſeſt miſrepreſentations, and that the two Bills were perfectly conſiſtent with old and conſtitutional regulations.

Mr. Fox roſe to ſet the Honourable Gentleman right as to his ſpeech at the Surry Meeting. He had ſaid there, that if the Sheriff had inſiſted that there was a majority on one ſide while it was on the other, and had then left the chair, the nature of the Meeting would have been changed, and it would have been expoſed to the operation of the Bill.

Mr. Onslow ſaid, he thought it his duty to ſet gentlemen right reſpecting the Meeting at Epſom. It was ſtated, that the

Meeting was convened for the exprefs purpofe of Petitioning for Peace; and thus people were deluded, thinking that they gave their fignatures againft the War, when in fact the Petition was merely a Petition againft the Bills. Some Gentlemen had afferted, that the Meeting amounted to four or five thoufand; fo far from that being the true ftate of the cafe, he was convinced it did not exceed three hundred: and furely three hundred were not enough to exprefs either the fenfe or nonfenfe of the county of Surry. He was aware that he might be afked how many were in his opinion competent to fpeak either. He declared he would not take upon himfelf to fay; he barred that joke; he believed, however, that one-fourth part of them confifted of orators from Copenhagen-houfe: he judged them to be members of the London Correfponding Society from their head-drefs, who had been deluded by the mifreprefentations which had gone abroad, and were told if they did not fign the Petition againft the Bills, that they would declare themfelves enemies to Peace and friends to eternal War.

Mr. Onflow afferted, that he knew nothing of the difmiffion of Mr. Waddington from the command of the Surry Corps of Cavalry; the odium of the meafure, therefore, if any belonged to it, appertained not to him.

Mr. Fox faid, the Honourable Gentleman feemed to entertain no very good opinion of the underftanding of his countrymen, when, in fumming up the reafons that influenced their votes, he had afferted that they had declared themfelves for a meafure with which they were unacquainted, although the Sheriff read the Petition and Addrefs fix times over.

Mr. Sheridan began his fpeech with taking notice of the charge which had been made of mifreprefentation on the part of thofe who oppofed the Bills before the Houfe. The Minifter, he obferved, complained of the fpeeches which had been made upon them, and had complained that Gentlemen, who oppofed him, ftated that thefe Bills did not leave to the people the right of Petitioning; that they had faid that all Meetings for that purpofe had been done away. They had never faid fo; they had only faid that the effect which could be wifhed to follow Meetings on political fubjects would be done away; for that if any Meeting took place, it was in the power of two magiftrates to diffolve thefe Meetings at their difcretion. That by thefe Bills, any Meetings on the queftions of War or Peace, on the conduct of the Minifter, on the mifcarriages of his plans, on the nature of his projects, and on all points for which the opinion of the public could be ufeful to them in being made known to that Houfe, would be done away by thefe

Bills.

Bills. On all these points, one of the Bills gave to the Magistrates the power, not indeed of preventing meetings, but of dissolving them at pleasure, under a pretence that the proceedings of the meetings, in the judgment of such Magistrates, tended to sedition. He would beg leave to notice the misrepresentations of a Learned Gentleman who had spoke that night, as well as the misrepresentations of the Right Honourable Gentleman who had complained, that resistance was recommended to the people of England, if the Bills before the House passed into a law. He was ready to allow, with that Learned Gentleman, that a meeting held by law, or convened upon legal notice, was not taken away by the Bill; he would, however, insist, that the people could not meet otherwise. Could that be considered as a free and proper meeting, which was undeniably under the check of an attendant Magistrate, who could, from his own surmise, instantly prevent it from discussing the object which had called it together, or dissolve it after it had entered into such discussion? If the Bill passed, he was confident that Englishmen could not deliberate on the propriety of Peace or War, on the expenditure of the public money, or the conduct of his Majesty's Ministers. They could not meet to deliberate on any grievance whatever. He could safely say, when that Act was passed, that it was no matter what Bill was brought in, what arbitrary law was proposed, for a complete despotism would then be necessarily established. It had been observed, that after the passing of the Bill, a Meeting might be held without public notice: he would admit the assertion; but to what effect would that assembly be held, when a Magistrate might prevent any of its members from uttering a single word?

For a moment he would suppose, that a Meeting of the People was held for the purpose of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform; were the Right Honourable Gentleman a magistrate, was it not evident how he would act on that occasion? Did he not at a former period, when that subject was mentioned in the House, declare that it tended to excite unseasonable alarms? And was not a declaration of that kind, from a person so high in power, a good sanction for a magistrate to suppress the most respectable assembly met for that purpose? Mr. Waddington, a gentleman of unblemished character and respectability, whose signature stood first on the Petition presented that night by his Learned Friend, had, on that very account, been expelled from an armed association into which he had entered for the defence of his country; and would not the men who had so illiberally expelled him for a difference in political opinion, take advantage of the discretionary power given by

by the Bill, to prevent any meeting, which had for its object a public meafure that might be unpleafing to them? This might, and moft probably would, be the cafe, if any number of perfons met for the purpofe of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, in the manner recommended fome years ago by the Minifter himfelf.

As the Minifter had complained of the effect of mifreprefentation on the fubject of thefe Bills, he would afk, whether he might not retort upon that charge? It was natural, Mr. Sheridan faid, to connect this Bill with that for the regulation of the affairs of the Eaft-India Company, formerly introduced by his Right Hon. Friend, Mr. Fox. The Author of that Bill had been grofsly mifreprefented upon that occafion, by thofe who fupported the prefent Minifter at the time; complaint of mifreprefentation came not therefore with the beft grace from that quarter.

The effect the oppofition to thefe Bills had produced on the Minifter was, he faid, fufficiently manifeft. It had already made him determine to lower his views; as was evident from his having that night elevated his voice; that being a pretty general indication on which the Houfe might rely. Strangers, who heard the Right Honourable Gentleman that night, might poffibly think, from his tone, that he was more than ever determined to purfue his plan with vigour; thofe, however, who had frequently heard him, and who knew him better, drew from that circumftance a contrary conclufion. They knew that, in proportion as he was lofty in his manner, he was finking in his intention; and therefore he, for one, fhould not object to attending the difcuffion of the provifions of this Bill in a Committee, if to a Committee it was to go, in order to fee what fort of a thing the Bill was intended to be at laft. He fhould not object, he faid, to attending to this, unlefs the Minifter fhould be unwilling that any of his opponents fhould be witneffes of his degradation.

With regard to the degree of credit that was due to petitions from the people, and what was or was not to be confidered as the voice of the people, it was, he faid, a matter that called for obfervation. He was forry that the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) was not in the Houfe; he had heard that Minifter fay, that this Bill ought not to pafs, unlefs the fenfe of the people was clearly in its favour; all he wifhed for was that this declaration fhould be abided by; if that were the cafe, he was confident that the Bill would never pafs into a law. Many Petitions had already been brought in, and time ought to be given in order that the Houfe might fee how many would be brought on both fides of the queftion;

queſtion; he was confident that, if that rule were obſerved, the real ſenſe of the people would be found to be ſo ſtrong as ſoon to put an end to ſuch meaſures. He gave notice that he ſhould himſelf preſent a Petition from the Ward of Farringdon Without, ſigned by 1700 perſons, who, as he underſtood, made one-ſixth of the whole City of London; and many other Members had Petitions from very numerous bodies of men from different parts of the kingdom. He ſaid this, becauſe he had heard from ſome worthy magiſtrates, that a great number of Petitions would come from the moſt reſpectable houſekeepers in the kingdom in favour of the Bills; and he could not help obſerving on what had fallen from a worthy magiſtrate of the City of London (Sir B. Hammet) who had ſaid, that as well might theſe Bills be ſaid to be an infringement on the Right of Petition, as that hanging a man for forgery was an infringement on writing. Had that worthy magiſtrate talked of the abuſe of franking, he might have been liſtened to with more attention, for it was a ſubject on which, as the Houſe well knew, he had ſome experience. He next took notice of what had been ſaid by another worthy Alderman (Mr. Luſhington) who had introduced a topic, which, in his opinion, ought to be deprecated in that Houſe, becauſe it might lead to infinitely bad conſequences: he meant that of making a diſtinction between Petitioners on account of the weight which was due to property; that it was property, and not numbers, that gave weight to Petitions. This was a wrong principle to be dwelt upon in the diſcuſſion of Petitions in that Houſe, nor was it univerſally followed by thoſe who were the moſt ready to introduce it. He ſhould be glad to know whether an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Mainwaring) who had complained of the treatment he experienced at the Meeting of the county of Middleſex, if the caſe had been reverſed, and he had been joined by the majority of the meeting, and the Noblemen who attended had been againſt him and the majority, in their ſentiments, he then would have ſaid any thing on the ſubject of property? In fact, thoſe diſtinctions between wealth and indigence, in conſidering the merits of Petitions, were falſe and fooliſh. To cry up the conſequence of property againſt numbers, or to make a diſtinction between the owner of land, and the induſtry and labour of thoſe who render it fertile, was a bad policy in that Houſe, when any appeal was made to its juſtice in the form of Petition.

Sir Benjamin Hammet roſe to explain. Sir Benjamin ſaid, he did not mean to reflect on the proceedings of the Common Hall, nor

nor to ſtate more than that the ſpeakers on both ſides were not liſtened to with equal patience and attention.

The Attorney General began with repeating what he had taken the liberty to ſay upon a former evening, that the more the people examined the Bills, the better ſatisfied would they be with them. Though it had been called a villanous hypocriſy to ſay that they were intended to ſecure the Rights and Liberties of the People, he perſiſted in that aſſertion, and he conceived that his Learned Friend (Mr. Erſkine) had either not read the Bills, or if he had read them, that he did not underſtand them, for the Bankers would have as much power, after they were paſſed, to aſſemble upon any public buſineſs as before.

With reſpect to the means by which the Petition was obtained from Newcaſtle upon Tyne, he produced a Hand-bill of invitation for that purpoſe. His Learned Friend (Serjeant Adair) had declared, that he thought the title of a Petition but of little conſequence; in which opinion he differed from him, and contended that the Petition was thereby one ſpecies of impoſition or miſrepreſentation, as that Hand-bill was another calculated to produce the ſame effect. He remembered that he formerly received an anonymous letter from Ireland, directing his attention to a Newſpaper full of advertiſements, as a teſt of the general ſenſe of the People there upon ſome public meaſure, and that when he read the advertiſements he found that various meetings were held in different parts of the kingdom all on the ſame day, which was the 15th day of ſome month he did not recollect. In the ſame manner was the extraordinary coincidence and co-operation by which the Petitions from the different parts of Great Britain were at the ſame time procured. He read the Hand-bill publiſhed at Newcaſtle, which ſtated, " that it was with great ſatisfaction the people of Newcaſtle were informed that the two Bills at preſent pending in Parliament had excited an alarm in Middleſex and Weſtminſter, &c. &c. and that the Merchants, Bankers, and Traders of London, were almoſt unanimouſly determined to petition Parliament on the ſame ſubject. The town of Newcaſtle had, in conſequence, followed, as it thought, the great examples of ſuch reſpectable places, but he doubted not that it would hereafter expreſs its diſapprobation of ſtatements ſo inaccurate and incorrect. The Hand-bill further ſtated, that contrary to the fifth article of the Bill of Rights, the Bill which, with a country inaccuracy, it repreſented to be brought into the Houſe of Commons by Lord Grenville, would not allow any meeting to be called independent of the preſence, permiſſion, or authority of a Miniſter or Magiſtrate;

and

and that any perſon convicted upon that Bill, was liable to a ſentence of tranſportation for any number of years adjudged, *at the pleaſure of the Court*, in Italics." The writer of this Hand-Bill, in quoting a paſſage of that Bill, had either purpoſely or unwittingly forgotten the words *maliciouſly* and *adviſedly*, without which, no charge of treaſon could be ſubſtantiated; and in the explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Bill, it was miſrepreſented that all meetings for the redreſs of grievances were thereby declared illegal, unleſs authoriſed by a certain number of magiſtrates. Lord Grenville's Bill more clearly defined treaſon, although it had created no new miſdemeanor; therefore the queſtion for the Houſe to conſider was, whether ſuch a Bill was neceſſary, juſt and proper, and whether it was proportioned to the neceſſity which would be the ſubject of future diſcuſſion? He ſubmitted it as his humble opinion, that enormous grievances did at this time exiſt, which the law could not, as it at preſent ſtood, redreſs; if he were wrong in this opinion, he ſhould throw off what he conſidered as his duty to ſupport them. He allowed that Petitions ought to be treated with the utmoſt reſpect, come from whom they would; for every Engliſh name was an obligation upon that Houſe; though it was the duty of that Houſe afterwards to examine the objects of the Petitions, and decide on their propriety. For his own part, he ſhould be happy, if any particular clauſes could be modified, or rejected altogether, provided ſuch reſtrictions could be retained as the important neceſſity called for.

Sir Watkin Lewes declared, that ſo much had been ſaid reſpecting the City of London, that he thought himſelf at liberty, in the abſence of the Lord Mayor, to declare for him his opinion of the late proceedings at Guildhall. He had no ſcruple in ſaying, that, on that occaſion, the ſenſe of the Livery was fairly taken, and that a majority were decidedly againſt the Bills. He remarked, however, that the Livery were only the repreſentatives of the Freemen of London, and that the Houſe could no more judge of the opinion of the Freemen from the reſolutions of the Livery, than they could aſcertain upon all occaſions the ſentiments of the Livery, from the votes of the Repreſentatives for the City. If the Houſe were eager to take advantage of any informality, he thought they were furniſhed with it in the title of the Petition which had been moved to be brought up for rejecting it, as it pretended to be what it really was not, a Petition of the Merchants and Bankers of the City of London; a circumſtance, however, which the generoſity of the Houſe, ever indulgent to the complaints of their Conſtituents, he was confident would be willing to overlook.

Mr.

Mr. Grey declared he found himſelf called upon by perſonal conſiderations to ſay a few words, at a time when he certainly was not much inclined to intrude himſelf upon the attention of the Houſe. With reſpect to the Petition in queſtion, he confeſſed he did not know whether or not it was ſigned by any Bankers in London; but of one thing he was confident, that many reſpectable Bankers had attended at the Meeting at which the Petition was voted. The miſrepreſentations with which the oppoſers of the Bills had been charged, and the reflections which the learned Gentleman had taken an opportunity, in conſequence of ſuppoſed miſrepreſentations, to throw out againſt the Petitions which had been preſented againſt them, he ſaid demanded the particular attention of the Houſe. Of a queſtion on which parties ſo materially differed, as to render the iſſue ſuch as to involve the ſalvation or the ſubverſion of the Conſtitution of the Country, it was not impoſſible to make very oppoſite repreſentations; and theſe it was natural for either party to charge as miſrepreſentations on the other. The Right Honourable Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had boaſted of ſpreading an alarm about the India Bill, which his Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox) had brought into Parliament: he would therefore aſk him, if there was no miſrepreſentation of his Right Honourable Friend on that occaſion, in conſequence of that alarm? Was it not ſaid of his Right Honourable Friend, that he wiſhed by the means of the Bill to place himſelf and his connections in a permanent ſituation? Was it not ſaid, that he wiſhed to wreſt the Crown from the preſent family on the Throne, and to ſecure it for himſelf and his heirs? And was it not aſſerted, that he wiſhed to ſeize upon the money belonging to the Eaſt-India Company, with a view to his own private aggrandizement? Did not the Right Honourable Gentleman know that ſuch things were ſaid; and did he not know them to be what every ſober thinking man muſt conſider groſs and ſcandalous miſrepreſentations? Becauſe theſe miſrepreſentations went abroad, did the Right Honourable Gentleman abate his oppoſition to the Bill? In all caſes of a ſimilar nature there naturally would be miſrepreſentation; in the preſent inſtance, he would be bold to ſay, that there had been as great miſrepreſentation on the one ſide as on the other; ſo that, balancing the influence of both, the opinions of the People, as they were delivered, might be conſidered as an unequivocal teſtimony of the ſenſe of the country.

The learned Gentleman had, he thought, complained without much cauſe; in the firſt inſtance which he had adduced, the words

mali-

maliciously and advisedly, which had been omitted in the hand-bill summoning the Meeting, were of very little importance, inasmuch as the jury, whatever was the law, never would, in their verdict, lose sight of the intention with which the act was committed. With respect to the other, that no Meeting could be held for petitioning Parliament without the permission and authority of a Magistrate, though the definition was not given with all the accuracy of a special pleader, he contended that this was the substance and effect of the Bill. A Meeting might indeed be convened, but its proceedings were entirely under the controul of a Magistrate, who, by a tyrannical and capricious mandate, might frustrate every purpose for which it was called. What, he would ask, was to be done if the Sheriff should refuse to call a Meeting? He knew two instances himself; one had lately occurred in Northumberland, in which the High Sheriff for the County had refused to call a Meeting upon application made to him. Would it then be contended, that this Bill did not infringe the right of petitioning? The subjects might meet and petition, indeed, and so could the people of Russia, under certain restrictions, similar to those which were about to be imposed upon the people of England. The Petition which he had presented from the Journeymen Taylors was another instance, their complaint of not being allowed to meet, to consult about their wages, was, he said, founded upon that clause of the Bill which prohibits all Meetings where money was taken. In taking notice of what was said by his Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox) the preceding night, he said that upon mature deliberation he subscribed to every word of it. The Right Honourable Gentleman had said, that he wished to stir the People to resistance against the Government, if these Bills be passed into law. What his Right Honourable Friend had said was founded on the pure principles of our Constitution. His sentiments were taken from the very foundation of our Revolution, which seated the present family on the Throne, and if that be not true, the family of Brunswick were usurpers. He would say again, that if any measure, destructive to the rights and liberties of the People of this country, be carried into effect; no matter by what part of Government; but if any measure of that nature be carried into effect, after the great majority of the People had pronounced their voice against it, resistance was justifiable.—No further did his Right Honourable Friend go upon that occasion. He did not state that he wished to rouse the People to resistance; he only said, that in such case resistance would no longer be a question of morality, but a question of prudence; but he did not, even in that case, state himself to be an advocate for resistance. He said

ſaid this, that it might not be thought that he was afraid of avowing what he had already aſſented to; and he would ſay, that he was perſuaded, the more it was examined, the more it would be found to be conſonant to the very foundation of that Conſtitution which they all admired, and which was the beſt ſecurity of the ſubject on one hand, and, on the other, the beſt ſupport to the Throne on which his Majeſty was placed.

MR. ALDERMAN LE MESURIER roſe to ſay a few words relative to the Common Hall, reſpecting which ſome obſervations had been made. He was perfectly ready to admit, that of thoſe who were preſent upon that occaſion, a decided majority were againſt the Bills before the Houſe: when he admitted that, however, he begged to make ſome few obſervations upon what paſſed there. He not only thought that the ſenſe of the Livery of the City of London was not expreſſed at that Meeting, but that the ſenſe of thoſe who were preſent was not fairly taken. Thoſe who ſpoke againſt the Bills were heard with great attention and applauſe, but thoſe who attempted to offer their reaſons why they were of opinion that the Bills ſhould paſs, were not ſuffered to ſpeak. Several Gentlemen of the utmoſt reſpectability endeavoured to obtain a few moments audience, but in vain; the inſtant any one of them gave the leaſt ſymptoms of an inclination to ſupport the Bills, a clamour was inſtantly raiſed, and all attempts at rational argument were ſilenced. Beſide this, thoſe Gentlemen who had the good fortune to agree with the majority of the people preſent, in his opinion, moſt groſsly miſrepreſented the nature and object of the Bills; as a proof of which, he would ſtate an argument of an Honourable Gentleman then in his eye, who was preſent at that Meeting: that Hon. Gentleman had ſaid, "That if theſe Bills paſſed, no book or pamphlet could be publiſhed without an *imprimatur*." He would leave it, therefore, to the candour and good ſenſe of the Houſe, whether there was any thing in the Bills which could be conſtrued into an attack on the liberty of the preſs. Such, indeed, was the miſapprehenſion of what was paſſing, that when the Lord Mayor held up his hand, merely to enforce ſilence, he was ſuppoſed to be putting the queſtion, and ſeveral people held up their hands accordingly. So convinced was he that the intentions of the people preſent could not fairly be collected in the uſual way, that he propoſed a poll or diviſion; but, upon conſulting the proper officer, he found that it was irregular, and utterly impracticable to obtain either.

The Alderman ſaid, he wiſhed further to ſtate, that the Guildhall was ſo large, that it was impoſſible for any man to be heard

 from

from one end of it to the other; nay, it was even impoſſible to hear the officer put the queſtion. Precautions certainly were taken to prevent any perſons but of the Livery from entering; and the regulation prevailed until the Hall was half full, after which he believed any perſons who choſe were ſuffered to enter. He deſired therefore, upon the whole, to be underſtood, as admitting that a great majority of thoſe who were in the Common Hall were againſt the Bill in queſtion, but that they by no means expreſſed the ſenſe of the Livery of London.

Mr. W. Smith explained, by ſtating that, inſtead of miſrepreſenting the nature of the Bills in the common Hall, the worthy Alderman had miſrepreſented him, for he argued only, that if theſe Bills paſſed into a law, he ſhould have every reaſon to fear that the next Bill which ſhould be brought into Parliamant would be for reſtraining the liberty of the preſs, and ſubjecting it to an *imprimatur*. He could not ſuppoſe this miſrepreſentation to be intentional, but attributed it to the confuſion of noiſe which the worthy Alderman complained of, and which muſt of courſe, have affected his hearing. The miſrepreſentation of any man's words, however, before his face, were but of little conſequence, he ſaid, as it gave him an opportunity to explain. He remarked as a ſingular circumſtance, that all the repreſentatives of the Livery oppoſed the reſolutions of that very Livery by whom they were elected. With regard to the Petition which had cauſed this extraneous debate, he ſaid, that although he was acquainted only with a very ſmall number of Bankers in the city, and ſtill leſs ſo with their ſignatures, yet he knew ſome very well; and he ſaw ſubſcribed to that Petition about half a dozen names, which both chriſtian and ſirname, were familiar to him, and ſo was the hand-writing; and the names, he would be bold to ſay, were not written in ſuch a hand as any Banker ſhould have cauſe to be aſhamed of.

Sir Benjamin Hammet, to prevent his being miſunderſtood, ſtated, that he had not ſaid that no Banker had ſigned that Petition but that no Banker had attended the meeting; at leaſt he believed not.

The Petition was then read and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Erskine preſented a Petition from upwards of 1500 perſons living at Portſmouth and Portſea, and ſaid, that if the Bills now pending paſs, the Petitioners, whoſe names he exhibited to the Houſe, could never appear to a ſimilar Petition again. An advantage, he ſaid, had been taken of an expreſſion of his, uttered in a parentheſis, when lamenting the innovations threatened by the preſent Bills; he had ſaid, " Whilſt yet the right of petitioning re-

mains

mains without infringement of law." In that expreſſion he inſiſted that he had been correct: and it particularly applied to the Petition before him. The Bill of Rights was, he contended, repealed by the Bills; if Petitions were to be preſented, how are they to be framed, debated, or ſigned, but in meetings? Was it poſſible, he would aſk, for numerous bodies of People to obtain rooms large enough to hold a number of perſons without paying money for them, and were they not thus proſcribed by law? The Houſe, he obſerved, had been the preceding night employed in reading a whole book, in order to judge whether the whole was or was not a Libel. How then could a Juſtice be allowed a power ſo much greater than that Houſe of judging of the ſeditious nature of a ſpeech before he had heard the whole of it to underſtand the context? Yet, in the former caſe, the Houſe had deemed two days neceſſary to deliberate after peruſal, and in the latter the deciſion was to be made before the hearing. Such in fact was the diſcretion given to Magiſtrates, which no principles could reconcile, and every day, he was perſuaded, would diſplay its danger and futility. What a ſituation would the working Taylors be placed in, were the Bills to paſs into laws, Bills which interfered with their means of employment, and the ſupport of their families. Mr. Erſkine having read an extract from a declaration of the London Correſponding Society, in which they diſclaimed the doctrine of an equalization of property, concluded with recommending a ſyſtem of lenity and mildneſs, inſtead of a ſyſtem of ſeverity and terror. He then moved, that the Petition be brought up.

The Petition was read in oppoſition to the Bills pending in Parliament. It was ſigned by 1544 perſons. Ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Mainwaring preſented a Petition from the United Society of Publicans in London, Weſtminſter, Middleſex, and the places adjacent. The Petition ſtated, that a Bill was pending in Parliament, which it was underſtood would interfere with the Friendly Societies meeting at the houſes of Publicans, praying that ſuch clauſes might be introduced as might prevent it from interfering with the intereſts of the Petitioners, and begging that they might be heard againſt the Bill by counſel, if it ſhould be neceſſary.

Mr. Sheridan remarked, that the Publicans had not objected to the principle of the Bills, becauſe they were under a ſort of controul on account of their Licences. He thought that as they had propoſed to be heard by counſel, that proceeding ſhould take place upon the ſecond reading, and before the Bill went into a Committee;

mittee; and ſince it appeared that the right of meeting for friendly ſubſcriptions, and the purpoſes of trade, were to remain whole and untouched, he wiſhed to know whether means would be taken to ſatisfy the people upon it?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, that he ſhould never attempt to introduce any alteration in the Laws to affect the rights of the common clubs or Friendly Societies. As to the hearing of counſel on this Petition, he conceived that the proper time would be when the Bill came out of the Committee upon the report.

The Speaker obſerved, that counſel was only propoſed to be heard if neceſſary, and therefore, after the Bill had been in a Committee, it was not too late for the omiſſion or introduction of any clauſe which the Petitioners might require, nor even for the recommitment of the Bill.

The following Petitions were alſo preſented againſt the Bill.

The Petition of the Electors and other inhabitants of the borough of Southwark, by Lord William Ruſſell.

Two Petitions from the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Mancheſter; the one ſigned by 4303 and the other by 6000 perſons.

A Petition from the city of Coventry, ſigned by 2350 perſons.

A Petition of the Merchants, Manufacturers, Traders, and other inhabitants of the town of Paiſley. Theſe four laſt were preſented by Mr. Fox.

Mr. Sheridan preſented the Petition from the Ward of Farringdon Without, the ſixth part of the whole city of London, ſigned by 1700 perſons.

The order of the Day was then read.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer then moved for the reading of the orders of the day, when he propoſed that the Bill for preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies ſhould be committed for the next day, and the Bill for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, the firſt open day.

Mr. Fox ſaid, that the Army Eſtimates were to be taken into conſideration on Thurſday; when

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced the commitment of the Bill for the Safety of his Majeſty's Perſon, &c. on Friday next. Adjourned at half paſt two.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25.

PETITIONS.

MR. PRAED presented a Petition against the Bills now pending in Parliament, entitled, a Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, &c. and a Bill for the Prevention of Seditious Meetings, &c. from the inhabitants of Exeter.

SIR CHARLES DAVERS presented one to the same effect from the Borough of St. Edmund's Bury.

SIR RICHARD GAMON presented a Petition to Parliament for measures to prevent Seditious Meetings, from the City, Close, College and School of Winchester.

A Petition to the same effect from the county of Huntingdon was rejected as irregular, because it had been signed by proxies.

MR. SHERIDAN presented a Petition against the Convention Bills from a numerous body of associated Men, consisting of Hatters, Weavers, Cordwainers, Book-Binders, Printers, Carpenters, Joiners, Smiths, &c. &c. &c. to the number of 15,000, which, if there had been longer time allowed, would have amounted to 50,000. He next presented a Petition of a similar construction from the Friendly Society of Working Bakers, to the number of 1000. The Right. Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Pitt, had asserted that the Friendly Societies would not be affected by these Bills, if they passed into a law, but Mr. Sheridan suspected that when that part of the Bill should be discussed, the Right. Hon. Gentleman would be convinced that he had been mistaken.

MR. SHERIDAN then presented a Petition against the Bills from 4000 of the inhabitants of Birmingham. Here again it had been pressed for time, or it would have had an astonishing number of more signatures. Such too was the situation of the People who signed this Petition, that in consequence of some Ministerial manoeuvre they were denied a public meeting, for no Newspaper would publish an Advertisement to call a Public Meeting, nor was a single hand-bill suffered to be circulated for that purpose. Yet notwithstanding those discouragements, in a day or two had 4000 signatures been subscribed.

SIR EDWARD KNATCHBULL did not rise to oppose the Motion for the Petition to lie upon the Table, but to caution the House how it accepted that Petition as the sense of the inhabitants of Birmingham. He was directed to this caution by a Petition which lay upon the Table of the House, and was presented in his absence by his Honourable Colleague, Mr. Honeywood, which was stated to be the Petition of the Mayor, Recorder, Freemen, and Inhabitants

ſtants of the city of Rocheſter. It was ſigned by 1500 perſons, among whoſe names there were not more than 150 names of Freemen, though Rocheſter contains 700 Freemen, and between thirty and forty thouſand inhabitants. He did not mean to caſt a reflection on the perſons who ſigned that Petition, but he knew that there were numbers who did not know what they ſigned. At the ſame time he had to obſerve, that the conduct of the Chief Magiſtrate of that city was reprehenſible in ſuffering a proceſſion at the ſame time, which was a diſgrace to the city, wherein the effigy of a reverend and reſpectable Biſhop (of Rocheſter) was carried about the town, and afterwards burnt. He ſaid it was no laughing matter, for not only the perſon of that Prelate, but the Church itſelf was inſulted, and he had to remark, that many of the perſons who ſigned that Petition were the very perſons who conducted the proceſſion. He wiſhed his Honourable Colleague had given him notice that ſuch a Petition was to be preſented, as he ſhould then have thought it his duty to attend and mention theſe circumſtances at that time.

Mr. Honeywood ſaid, that it was not for want of reſpect or attention, that his Honourable Colleague had not proper notice given that ſuch a Petition was to be preſented, but becauſe he himſelf knew nothing of it till it was ſent to him, and on account of the amazing rapidity with which the Bills were hurried through the Houſe, he was deſired to deliver it ſoon. He did call upon his Honourable Colleague to apprize him of it, but he could not find him, and the urgency of the occaſion would not admit delay. The Meeting however, as he before ſtated to the Houſe, was regular, and notwithſtanding the reflection thrown upon the Chief Magiſtrate, he would aſſert that his conduct had been bold and proper in coming forward at ſuch an alarming criſis like an independant man. The Recorder alſo was as good, pure, and peaceable character as the Hon. Baronet; and in regard to the fuſs which had been made about the proceſſion, perhaps it would have been better if it had been omitted. About the time of that proceſſion, Mr. Honeywood arrived in Rocheſter. The people having by ſome means received intelligence of his approach, aſſembled on the road at the other end of Chatham, and begged his permiſſion to attend him and draw him without horſes to his inn. This he declined, being apprehenſive that ſome miſconſtruction would be made, and paſſed through Chatham as uſual, attended by the people only, who behaved with the utmoſt decorum. When he came to the entrance of Rocheſter, however, they took his horſes from the carriage, and drew him to the inn, where he addreſſed them from the ſtep, and

exhorted them to depart in good order, and in lefs than ten minutes they had entirely difperfed, leaving the ftreets of Rochefter as quiet as the Bar of the Houfe of Commons then was. Some time after this he heard a huzza, and upon looking out of the window, he faw fome boys leading an afs, with no common figure upon it, and there the matter, fo far as he knew, ended. He had occafion yefterday to be at Rochefter again, when he was informed that the figure on the afs had been burnt; but he heard of no other irregularity, nor had he ever heard till now that any of the people who figned the Petition were concerned in the proceffion, which he was much inclined to mifbelieve. Refpecting that proceffion, however, he had to ftate, that fome hand-bills were afterwards diftributed, one of which he had not about him, but he thanked his Honourable Colleague for lending one, wherein the Mayor, Recorder, and two other Magiftrates, expreffed their difapprobation of the proceffion. He thought it would have been much better if the Honourable Baronet had attended when the Bill was prefented, but he was glad that he had now given him an opportunity to explain.

Sir Edward Knatchbull did not mean to throw the *flighteft* reflection on the Mayor, but he thought him reprehenfible to let the proceffion pafs by his houfe; and as to the fignatures of the hand-bill, one of the Magiftrates (Mr. Mancroft) was not in town at the time; he had told him fo, and had therefore merely figned it to fuit his own private purpofes.

Mr. Honeywood informed the Houfe, that the Mayor had no knowledge of the proceffion till it was over.

Sir John Mordaunt affured the Houfe, that the Petition prefented from Birmingham did not contain the fenfe of the majority of the inhabitants there; that it was procured by fallacious means from the lower orders of the People, who were induced to fign it by the connection of a Petition for Peace with the Petition againft the Bills, and that no Public Meeting had been called for the occafion.

Mr. Sheridan reminded the Houfe, that he had ftated the Petition to be figned by 4,000 of the inhabitants of Birmingham, and confequently no man who knew the immenfe population of that town could imagine it was figned by the majority. If he had brought the letter which he received from a refpectable Gentleman of that Town with the Petition, he could have mentioned more precifely the reafons why a greater number of fignatures was not obtained. One caufe was, the rapidity with which the Bills were preffed; another was, that an attempt had been made by the oppo-

fite

ſite party to promote a violence if the Meeting was called; and a third, and a very obvious reaſon was that which he had ſtated, that no advertiſement had been publiſhed, and no hand-bills permitted to be circulated about the Town. Thus the People were deprived of the means of a Public Meeting. And now he would ſay a word or two upon the Rocheſter Tale, which, if the caſe had permitted, would have come with a better grace, ſo far as merely related to the name, from the neighbouring City of Canterbury, as it was of that ſpecies which is commonly called a Canterbury Tale. He muſt remark, that it did not at all apply to the Petition which he had juſt before preſented from Birmingham; and, as he was about to preſent a Petition from Warwick, he thought it had better be repeated, or ſome ſuch ridiculous ſtory ſubſtituted, ſince it would apply equally as well to Warwick as to Birmingham. He conceived the ſtory was not at all entitled to credit, ſo far as it involved the perſons who ſubſcribed to the Petition. He deprecated the circumſtance ſo far as it related to a Reverend Prelate, but ſuſpected it had ariſen from a ſtatement in the public Papers, which he hoped was a miſrepreſentation (as he could not for a moment imagine that any learned and dignified perſon could be ſo indiſcreet, and ſo ignorant of the principles of our Conſtitution to ſay), that "The maſs of the People had nothing to do with the Laws but to obey them!"

Sir Edward Knatchbull explained again that he did not mean to throw any reflection on the perſons who ſigned the Petition, but he thought the Mayor reprehenſible in ſuffering the proceſſion.

Mr. Sheridan obſerved that this was an extraordinary explanation; for all that he could underſtand by it was, that either the Hon. Baronet thought there was no harm in burning a Biſhop, and therefore did not mean to reflect on the perſons who permitted it, or elſe there was harm, and thoſe perſons who permitted the act were implicated in it.

Mr. Fox begged leave to ſay a few words. The proceſſion he with every perſon muſt equally condemn; therefore he hoped that he ſhould not be underſtood to defend it: but he could not help remarking how much juſt indignation was ſhewn by the Houſe at one time to irregularities of this deſcription, and how little at another. There had been frequent inſtances of partial diſlike towards him, when, becauſe his perſon could not be attacked, the unfortunate animal, which was of the ſame name, was condemned to ſuffer, and yet no notice had been taken. Another inſtance was that ſhewn againſt a reverend perſon, though not a Biſhop, who has

diſtin-

diftinguifhed himfelf for the love of fcience and liberty, and will be remembered fo long as fcience and liberty fhall be refpected. That reverend perfon, to the difgrace of this kingdom, has been forced to feek an afylum in a foreign country in confequence of fuch indecent outrages; outrages which, to the difgrace of the kingdom, will ftain the page of hiftory for having paffed unpunifhed. The perfon he alluded to was Dr. Prieftley, who was not only burnt in effigy, but affaulted in his own houfe, and againft whom thofe very French principles had been put in practice, which were fo induftrioufly imputed to him. The mifcreants who infulted him not only carried an effigy of ftraw about the town, but they enclofed the heart of an animal in it, which they pierced with a pike, and expofed the effigy ftained and ftreaming with blood in that horrible condition. They afterwards bore that bleeding heart before the effigy, which they confumed, infinuating thereby, that in that manner they would have deftroyed the perfon himfelf as a traitor. This was not then ufed as an argument, but he reminded the Houfe that it was the nature of violence to produce violence, and the nature of infult to produce infult, and that it was not by acts of oppreffion and cruelty, bnt by juftice, equity, and forbearance, that the People and the Government were to be united. It therefore became the Houfe to convince the world that it acted with perfect impartiality, and that it fhould not fly out with indignation at one indecent action, when it difregarded others ten thoufand times more deteftable. With regard to the admiffion of the Petitions as the fenfe of the majority of the places from which they came, it was abfurd, for they were to be confidered only as the opinions of the perfons who figned them, and he therefore thought the title fhould always be the Petition of the Underfigned.

Mr. William Smith was of the fame opinion.—Much alfo had been faid of mifreprefentation, but if he had been in the Houfe when the Petition from Bath was prefented, he fhould have ftated that no other purpofe had been expreffed in the public notice of the Meeting than an Addrefs of Congratulation, and that the recommendatory claufe for the adoption of additional meafures was inferted after, and that many Gentlemen who figned the Petition, went away without any idea of fuch a claufe.

Mr. Sheridan prefented two feparate Petitions againft the Bills from the inhabitants of the town of Warwick, againft the refpectability of whofe names there could be no complaint, fince the firft fignature on the lift was that of Lord Dormer, and foon after followed the name of a perfon who, though no Bifhop, fo long

long as unrivalled worth and unrivalled learning were entitled to reſpect, would be reſpected. It was that of Dr. Samuel Parr.

Mr. Sheridan next preſented a Petition againſt the Bills from the Inhabitants of the town of Kilmarnock. Notwithſtanding that the People of Scotland were reſtrained from a free declaration of their opinions, he had an opportunity of knowing the ſentiments of many of them ever ſince he had the honour of bringing forward a motion relative to the Royal Boroughs, and he could poſitively aſſert that there never was a time when the people there were more diſſatisfied than at preſent. It was indeed a ſullen and ſilent diſſatisfaction, from which the Right Hon. Gentleman oppoſite might argue approbation, but it was ſuch a mode of reaſoning as a man might uſe who ſtuns another with a blow, and then obſerves, that he expreſſes no diſſatisfaction.

General Macleod informed the Houſe, that if the Petitions againſt the Bills were not received from Scotland, there were other cauſes to be aſſigned than that the people there gave them their approbation. The people were terrified by the Syſtem of Terror, and were grown timid on account of the ſeverity of the Laws, the cruelty of the ſentences, and the mode in which puniſhments were inflicted, when the Judges ſhould have ſhewn mercy. He was happy that this Petition had been preſented, of which he had before no knowledge, and which ſupported another (from Paiſley.) He then commented on the diſtinction which was made, of late, between the higher and lower orders of people; and obſerved, that ſuch a diſtinction was moſt dangerous to ſocial life, to our beloved Monarch, and the Conſtitution. What is it that the rich hold their eſtates by but the ſufferance of the lower orders of people? And are not their rents enforced, in ſome degree, by law, and their rank in life entirely beholden to that ſufferance? He cautioned the Houſe to take care how ſuch opinions get abroad, for once the lower orders of the people are made ſenſible of theſe invidious diſtinctions, as they are the moſt powerful of the two claſſes, ſome fatal conſequences may enſue.

Mr. Wilmot ſtated, that no diſtinction had been made by any member, but that it came in a letter from Birmingham, which an Honourable Baronet (Sir James Mordaunt) had read. He then adverted to the Coventry Petition, preſented the preceding evening by Mr. Fox, the prayer of which he had refuſed to ſupport, and ſaid it was not the ſenſe of the majority of the Inhabitants of that City.

The Speaker ſubmitted to the Houſe whether members ought not to attend in their places to make their obſervations at the time

the Petitions were preſented, and not to revert, in the courſe of other buſineſs, to former Petitions, the great inconvenience of which was ſo apparent as not to require his notice.

Mr. Fox ſaid, that the Coventry Petition was ſigned by 2500 perſons; and he did not go further when he preſented it than to ſtate it to be the Petition of thoſe who ſigned it. If any one perſon had a leſs right, too, to make any objections to that Petition than another, he thought it was that Honourable Gentleman, becauſe the Petitioners could not find the Noble Lord his colleague (Lord Sheffield); and they therefore waited on him requeſting his concurrence, which he refuſed to give, and, of courſe, they had then a right to apply to any member thay pleaſed, and they applied to him (Mr. Fox), as a perſon agreeing with their ſentiments. The Honourable Gentleman, therefore, could not complain that he had not complete notice of it; and, Mr. Fox ſaid, he preſented it purpoſely on the night when the Call of the Houſe took place, to give the faireſt opportunity for any objection, though another time would to himſelf have been more agreeable.

Mr. Wilmot ſaid, that he ſtayed till paſt one o'clock, when he retired with fatigue.

Mr. Francis obſerved, that, at all times, diſtinctions were unjuſtifiable, and more particularly now; for the lower orders were the people moſt intereſted in the paſſing of the Bills, and ought to be moſt favoured, becauſe the higher orders always had other avenues, and better means of acceſs, to procure a redreſs of grievances.

Mr. Vansittart began to ſpeak, and was called to order by Sir Francis Baſſet.

Mr. Sheridan preſented a Petition againſt the Bills from the town of Dunſe, in Scotland.

Mr. Fox preſented one to the ſame effect from the Gentlemen, Freemen, and Merchants of Dartmouth, in Devonſhire. It contained 160 names. This drew forth a few obſervations from Mr. Fox and Mr. Rolle, upon the unanimity of the people in that county, which ceaſed by a call to order from Sir Francis Baſſet.

Mr. Coke preſented a Petition againſt the Bills from a number of the moſt reſpectable Inhabitants of the Borough of Great Yarmouth, in the county of Norfolk. As that borough was immediately under the direction of Government, he ſaid, of courſe, there were many people there who had not ſigned it, among whom were the Receiver-General and Officers of the Cuſtoms.

Mr. Rolle preſented a Petition ſigned, he ſaid, by hundreds of people in the Borough of South Molton, in Devonſhire, requeſting Parlia-

Parliament to adopt meafures for the prevention of Seditious Meetings.

Mr. Thornton prefented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Colchefter againft the Bills.

He took occafion to ftate, that it was figned by very many of the moft refpectable perfons at that place, that it lay for fignatures only during the fpace of feven hours, from a fear that it would get too late to the Houfe, and that it received in that time the fanction of 800 names. He expreffed the greateft mortification that he could not join in fentiment with his Conftituents fo far as related to the Bills before the Houfe, but he fully coincided with them in their wifhes for a Peace, and hoped the Houfe would hereafter come to fuch refolutions as would open a door for treating at the firft favourable opportunity.

Mr. Sheridan commended the firmnefs and candour of the Honourable Gentleman, and hoped he agreed with his conftituents, in their idea of the unexampled rapidity with which the Bills were hurried through the Houfe, and if he did, he hoped that it would prevail with him to urge the neceffity of taking a longer time.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

Mr. Curwen faid, he rofe agreeable to the notice he had given on a former day, to propofe to the Houfe the delay of one week before they proceeded further with thofe Bills; the proceeding with due deliberation became both the wifdom and juftice of the Houfe, and never was fo ftrongly called for on any former occafion; He fhould feel very indifferent to the imputations of wifhing to prolong the difcuffion by vexatious delays, for fortunately for him, he had what would be deemed great authority by the Right Hon. Gentleman, at leaft, he had that of a Right Hon. Secretary of State, who he was forry not to fee in his place, and from whofe affiftance and great abilities he had much to expect in favour of his motion. That Right Hon. Gentleman on the firft notice for bringing in this Bill, with a manly regard to the liberty of the fubject, declared that the Bill ought not to pafs unlefs it met the wifhes of the people; and in proof of his fincerity concurred with his Right Hon. Friend in the propriety of a Call of the Houfe, which he avowed he had oppofed on almoft every other occafion, on the ground of a fufficient time not having yet been given to know the fenfe of the people; he called upon the Houfe to give a fair opportunity for obtaining it. The prefent was a meafure of which they had no precedent or example fince the Conftitution had been eftablifhed; if he had the power, he would not ufe it againft thefe

 Bills

Bills on any other ground but thofe of the general feelings and wifhes of the country; if the nation could fuffer it, he fhould think, much as he lamented it, that it was ufelefs to withhold chains from thofe who had loft the relifh and love of liberty.

Such was not, could not be the cafe with the people of England; it was a grofs calumny upon them to fuppofe it; he fhould ftate, as fhortly as he could, to the Houfe the reafons which he thought ought to induce them to afford the fhort refpite he required for the country, that their feelings and fentiments might be fairly known. He thought this neceffary before, he thought it ten times more fo in confequence of what had paffed in the late difcuffion on the Bill, which he faid he fhould notice before he fat down, agreeing with the Right Honourable Secretary of State, that it would be madnefs to pafs the Bill, unlefs it accorded with the wifhes of the people, and he agreed with him in no other point or view refpecting it; nothing but the wild, mifguided, misjudging policy of the Right Honourable Gentleman, could ever have brought fuch meafures under difcuffion; if mifchief fhould enfue, it would be chargeable alone on thofe who forced it upon them, and he could not fuppofe the nation fo loft to every manly feeling as quietly and tamely to part with their Liberties at the *imperial mandate of a Minifter*. The Right Honourable Gentleman would learn, and he trufted to his coft, that Englifhmen are not to be infulted with impunity. As far as the fenfe of the country had yet been taken, it had been almoft unanimous in the reprobation of thefe meafures; an honeft indignation had been raifed, which had feldom if ever attended any other meafure, and well it might, for none ever fo ftrongly called for it. Let them examine for a moment what were the Petitions on the other fide; few, if any, avowed their approbation of the particular meafures before the Houfe; they all took it for granted that the exifting laws were not fufficient to guard the facred Perfon of his Majefty from infult, and called upon them to render them fo; was this really the cafe, was there a man in that Houfe who would not heartily concur with them? To thefe Gentlemen he faid, "firft let us have it proved the laws are not fufficient. In what predicament do the other Petitions ftand? They are from chartered bodies of perfons reprefented in this Houfe. The rights of thefe Gentlemen are not attacked; that they fhould be indifferent or perhaps not difpleafed to have ftill greater privilege than the monopoly that they at prefent enjoy, renders their approval of little weight." One individual under the fame circumftances with thofe Gentlemen, appearing as a petitioner, weighed a thoufand times more; his teftimony was againft himfelf, the teftimony of a

party

party was the moſt concluſive that could be had. One of the moſt odious and obnoxious principles of the Bill, was the diabolical attempt to eſtabliſh diſtinctions between different claſſes of ſubjects, and this principle, however Gentlemen reprobated it, had been pretty well avowed by the kind of arguments which had been uſed in ſupport of the Bill. If there had been as little alacrity on the part of the people, as he contended there had been zeal to expreſs to them their ſentiments, it might well have been accounted for from the particular circumſtances of the caſe. Thoſe who from habit, perhaps from ſituation, have uſually taken a lead in bringing forward the ſentiments of the country, had not a common intereſt with the bulk of the nation—with the great collective body of the people; a further time in juſtice ſhould be given; if there was no other ground to claim it, he might plead the unrivalled popularity which that Right Honourable Gentleman has poſſeſſed, as a further reaſon for delay; the effects of that blind confidence has led to all our preſent ſituation of unparalleled calamity. Changes of opinion were at all times effected with difficulty, and eſpecially opinions formed on the beſt feelings of the heart; there was a period beyond which credulity itſelf could not reach—the country felt it, and for the firſt time had began to open their eyes to the ruin that awaited them. They had began to diſcover that blinded by alarm, they had been led to a concurrence in a deſtructive and ruinous war, a war which the good ſenſe that reſcued them from the effects of a Spaniſh and Ruſſian Armament, would equally have protected them againſt, had it been left to its fair operation. To thoſe fears, to thoſe alarms the nation was again called to divert its attention from the ſurrender of the ground-work of its liberties; reluctantly had the country become ſenſible of its danger; as far as its opinion had been taken, an honeſt indignation has marked the deſign; and would they doubt an equal energy and ardour would mark the deliberations of every other part of the kingdom; would that Houſe hazard the paſſing the Bill contrary to the declared ſenſe of the nation? It dared not, it would not, becauſe it ought not to do it. An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) profeſſed to believe this outcry was but a pretext to diſplace a Miniſter. "Grant it as true, as I believe it falſe, the meaſure would be fully juſtified; on what ground is it that we accuſe this Miniſter, of an attempt to avail himſelf of the power and influence of his ſituation to deſtroy the Conſtitution? I truſt the country will feel the full force of his delinquency, and that the united voice of the people will call upon the Crown to diſmiſs for ever a Miniſter who has forfeited

forfeited every claim to confidence. Proud ſhould he be to concur in raiſing this ſpirit, and rouſing the country from the apathy in which it has too long remained, to the feelings of honeſt indignation at ſo daring an attack; ſuch feelings would be the beſt proof of the value and eſtimation in which Britons hold their Liberty. I ſhould proudly exult in hearing the voice of the nation preſent itſelf at the foot of the Throne, with thoſe ſentiments of manly warmth and affection ſo natural to the character of Engliſhmen, addreſſing a beloved Monarch; Sire, we heard with delight your aſſurance on the firſt day of this Seſſion of Parliament, that you confided with perfect ſecurity in the affections of your people, that the calamities of war, and the iron hand of famine had been borne with patience and reſignation, that the blood and treaſure of your people had not been ſpent in vain, that it had produced peace at home, and wrought a thorough change in the opinions of our enemies; forgetting the painful ſenſation that our loyalty had ever been doubted, they were ſenſible only to the exultation and joy of poſſeſſing your returned confidence in our attachment to your Perſon and Government, they looked with well-grounded hope to the ſpeedy return of the bleſſings of Peace. But, what is our alarm and diſappointment, when we now find the whole nation is again to be treated as if diſaffected to your Perſon, and enemies to our Conſtitution; you have been deceived, and we baſely calumniated. To doubt of our affection and loyalty is attempted. Sire, our intereſt and yours are inſeparable, the blow that levels one, muſt deſtroy the other; is there a man from one end of the kingdom to the other, who does not feel himſelf equally inſulted with your Majeſty, in the late abominable conduct of a lawleſs mob? Deign to attend to your people, know you reign in their hearts, wound them not by diſtruſt, give a fair diſplay of that affection you feel for them, ſhew them that love and veneration which they know glows in your breaſt for the laws and liberties of your country, permit not its benign influence to be intercepted by an ambitious and wicked Miniſter, whoſe intereſts are not yours, nor your people's; and there is not a drop of blood that flows in their veins you may not command in defence of your ſacred Perſon and Government; diſmiſs from your councils a man who has calumniated your people, who has neither the power nor the will to reſtore confidence." Such I confidently hope, ſaid Mr. Curwen, will be the conduct of the people. He agreed with the Right Honourable Gentleman in wiſhing a fair and decided opinion on the conduct of thoſe who ſupport, and thoſe who oppoſe theſe meaſures; they were fairly at

iſſue, he looked with confidence for the deciſion, they were accuſed of miſrepreſentation; "ſtrange, indeed (ſaid he) has been our conduct, who intreat this Houſe to grant further time, which muſt not only deſtroy its effects, but expoſe us to the contempt and reſentment of the country; if the ſupporters of theſe meaſures are ſerious in their charges, it is their intereſt to cloſe with my propoſition." He deprecated, as unworthy of a good cauſe, every attempt to miſrepreſent, come from what quarter it will, but he would not believe they owed to ſuch means the numerous Petitions on the table. The delay he propoſed would fully aſcertain to the ſatisfaction of the Houſe, what are the feelings of the people. The conſequences which muſt infallibly reſult from theſe meaſures, were infinitely more alarming than at firſt met the eye. Rob the people of their right of petitioning, take from them their intereſt and connection with the democratic part of the Conſtitution, and you deſtroy with their conſequence their freedom, and with theirs your own; he ſaid the conſequence of any body of men could not be taken away without their freedom following it. What would be the ſituation of this Houſe, when they had drawn a line of ſeparation, which renounced the ſupport and controuling influence of twelve parts out of thirteen of the whole people? If the full force of all the united body of the nation had been barely ſufficient to maintain to them the due influence in the ſcale, what would be their ſituation when they reſted upon the repreſented part only? Three or four hundred thouſand were the moſt extended calculation out of ſix millions. If they renounced the controuling influence of the people, if they wantonly deſtroyed the ties which had united us, can we, ought we to look for their ſupport; an act of ſuch injuſtice muſt degrade us in their eſtimation, and make them view with ſatisfaction our terms of debaſement and degradation. Yes, having nothing to hope from them, they would leave them to conduct a ſtruggle, which had in it nothing to engage their affection, or to affect their intereſt; they would then haſten to what he was not without apprehenſion and fear of, they were faſt verging to a mere Regiſter Office to record the burthens of the people.

The Bill muſt, in its effects, alter the whole Conſtitution; popular opinion had reſtrained and counteracted the power and influence of corruption; take that away, and ineffectual would be the ſtruggle. The exiſtence of the Houſe of Commons depended upon the united intereſt of the whole body of the nation. That increaſed corrupt influence of the Crown, together with the torrent of honour which had of late years inundated that Houſe, and deprived the democratic part of the Conſtitution of ſuch a weight

of

of property, called upon them, if they valued the Conftitution, to cherifh every prop and fupport to help them to maintain their juft and neceffary influence. The Bill will have the odious effect of having for its mark the bulk of the people, in contradiftinction to the few who were already in poffeffion of the monopoly of the elective franchife. It wanted the firft principle of law, that all fhould be equally the objects of it. A free country could alone exift where there was freedom of fpeech, and freedom of the prefs; when thefe are gone, all that remains muft foon follow. To advert to the grounds on which they were called upon to pafs this Bill, a proof of the exifting circumftances which required or juftified any meafure had been denied them, and they were called upon to give their fanction to it upon general notoriety, on which they differed moft widely; and yet Minifters, if they were in poffeffion of information to juftify any proceeding at all, choofe to withhold it. The principle of former legiflators was, firft to confider the nature and extent of the meafure that required their interference, and adapt their remedy to the difeafe; but their rule of legiflation was to be governed by the will of a Minifter.

He thought the experience they have had fhould teach them a greater degree of caution. A Committee of Parliament did declare a traitorous correfpondence to exift; repeated verdicts of juries negatived that fact, and every honeft man in the country rejoiced at it. It was this interference which he blamed on a former occafion; had the laws been left to take their courfe, a proper punifhment would have followed. Should that Houfe not doubt a little its own feelings and difpofition, too eafily to credit every thing which led to the confirmation of plots and difaffection? As a proof of it, he faid, he fhould inftance the information of an Honourable Member, who, he was fatisfied, had no intention to miflead the Houfe, when he informed them, that the doctrine of King-killing had been preached at Copenhagen-houfe; but how was the fact? Alarmed indeed fhould he have been, if there had been a man wicked enough, or fuch a body of men fo loft to the feelings that ought, and do actuate Englifhmen, to have been paffive auditors of fuch doctrine. No fuch thing did happen; that meeting paffed with perfect decorum and order. That abominable hand-bill was faid to have been diftributed there. Had Government no reporters there? Was it not the intereft of thofe gentlemen to deftroy the effect of the order and regularity of the meeting, for fuch perfons can exift but in times of fufpicion? Would it have been fafe for any but themfelves to have been the diftributers? How comes it, if otherwife, the perfons concerned

were

were not apprehended? Would these reporters have been ashamed for once to act an open and honourable part? If they were to judge which side had the most interest, he should be authorised in attributing it to them sooner than any other. He might notice, as shewing the disposition of the House, the patience with which it endured a story of a worthy Alderman, which, when noticed, was so contemptible as to meet the reprobation of the whole House. He was much obliged to a noble Lord, who the former night entertained the House with such a mass of, what should he call it, absurdity and nonsense as called forth in his breast astonishment and indignation, that it could be supposed possible that the affection and loyalty of a whole country to its government could be destroyed by such treason to God, the Constitution, and common sense. He thought such productions could only have found an author and admirer within the walls of Bedlam. Upon the extension of treason he should say but a few words; the most clear and absolute necessity would alone induce him to increase the penal statutes, satisfied that severe penalties, and especially disproportionate ones, tended rather to the escape than punishment of offenders. He could not have forgot the conduct of a Right Honourable Gentleman upon a former Treason Bill, where a treason was to have been made a felony; on its being objected that the accused would be in a less advantageous situation, and particularly so with respect to the advantage he would have drawn from having a list of his witnesses previous to his trial. How was that treated by the Right Honourable Gentleman? He said, that might be so swelled by a cloud of witnesses as to render it perfectly nugatory. With such opinions and sentiments of the criminal jurisprudence of the country, he felt himself fully justified in doubting of every measure that should come to them through the channel of that Right Honourable Gentleman. In the name of the people of England, he intreated the House not to preclude them an opportunity of being heard against these Bills at their bar: if the voice of the people was to stop these Bills, tell the people not to owe it to any other branch of the Legislature, nor place them in the situation of seeming indifferent to their interest.

An Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Wilberforce) asked if they loved Peace. Might he not with as much justice and propriety ask that Honourable Gentleman, if he loved liberty, and could have been sincere in his endeavours to obtain freedom for thousands who never tasted of its blessings, and now be a friend to measures which would, if carried, establish despotism in a country which considered liberty as the first of its possessions? Was not such conduct and

were not ſuch inſinuations unworthy of gentlemen! To the conſiſtency of mens characters we ought alone to appeal for the motives of their conduct; gentlemen call *hear*; to that teſt he was not afraid to apply. Since he had the honour of a ſeat in that Houſe, he had exerciſed an unbiaſſed opinion, nor had his attachment to men warped him from thoſe principles which hitherto had, and he hoped always would decide his conduct. He ſubſcribed moſt heartily to the doctrine laid down by his Honourable Friend, Mr. Fox, upon a former night, that if they forced theſe Bills upon the great bulk of the nation againſt their will, reſiſtance would be no longer a queſtion of moral duty but of prudence; contraſt this doctrine, and then let the nation judge whether the friends or oppoſers of theſe Bills are the moſt entitled to their confidence.

A Right Hon. Gentleman, the Secretary at War, talked of employing *a vigour more than law*; what does this mean? Is he ſo little acquainted with the ſtuff of which an Engliſh heart is compoſed, that he can ſuppoſe thoſe who have been the ornament of their country, who have been proved to ſhed their blood in its defence, would forget the love of Liberty they ſucked in with their mother's milk, and become the inſtruments of enſlaving their fellow ſubjects? It was calumniating thoſe brave men to ſuppoſe it. One tyrant made the experiment, and may the example deter a repetition of the attempt: reſtore to them the bleſſings of peace and proſperity would naturally follow; let them change their meaſures, reſpect the Conſtitution, correct the abuſes that afford but too juſt grounds for complaint, and he truſted they ſhould have nothing to fear from either anarchy or deſpotiſm. Deeply impreſſed with the awful criſis of the moment, he felt it his duty to ſubmit to the conſideration of the Houſe, the propriety of adjourning for a week the further diſcuſſion of this Bill.

Mr. Harrison roſe, he ſaid, from a principle of propriety, to ſecond the motion. He declared it to be his opinion, as far as he could judge, that the people of the country were totally averſe to the Bills; and he lamented that a Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas), whoſe concurrence in that idea he ſhould have expected, was abſent. Time, he thought, ſhould be given to obtain the opinions of the people in the remote parts of the kingdom. It was a meaſure that ought not to be adopted by Miniſters, without they meant to inſult the people, and alienate their affections from Parliament. It was a meaſure in his mind not to be endured; it was abominable, deſtructive, and a daring violation of the liberties of the country. Admitting the arguments of Miniſters in their full extent, and even allowing their calumnious aſſertions to be true,

true, the meaſure ought, nevertheleſs, to be indignantly rejected, as a meaſure ſubverſive of the Bill of Rights and the Conſtitution. It was, he ſaid, ſtrange, that Miniſters ſhould, at this critical period, venture to introduce a meaſure that tore away the ſecurity of the ſubject, and deſtroyed the great charter of the nation, as eſtabliſhed by the Bill of Kights.

Mr. Wallace conſidered that a certain proportion of reſpect was due to the opinions, the wiſhes, and Petitions of the people, when they were fairly and honeſtly expreſſed. With regard to the Petitions then before that Houſe, it had been inconteſtibly ſhewn, that they were obtained, in various parts of the kingdom, by the groſſeſt calumnies and the fouleſt miſrepreſentations: he therefore wiſhed them to be diſcuſſed in a Committee as ſoon as poſſible, in order that they might be printed, and the people be enabled to form an accurate opinion of what they had to expect from them. He underſtood what Gentlemen meant, when they called for procraſtination, and were againſt having the meaſure made more palatable; it would not, they well knew, occaſion that oppoſition it had met with. Their conduct, when modified, ſhewed they were not averſe to illegal reſiſtance, ſo far as it was revolutionary, but not connected with what produced the Revolution in 1688. That meaſure was attained without any violation of the Conſtitution. Gentlemen on the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe, however, went farther, and directly attacked that Conſtitution, reſpecting which they affected ſo much tenderneſs. They endeavoured, by their language, to influence the freedom of debate, to raiſe the ſword, and light up the flame of civil war. The exertion and propagation of the principles of the London Correſponding Society, by Citizen Lee, were, he inſiſted on it, clearly connected with the inſults offered to the King. The attempt of Miniſters to defeat their machinations gave offence to ſome Gentlemen; he was, nevertheleſs, convinced, that by adopting the preſent meaſures the country would be ſaved. It had been advanced by an Honourable Gentleman, that it was immaterial whether the nation degenerated into a ſtate of anarchy or of deſpotiſm. Thoſe Gentlemen, however, who oppoſed the Bills, would not find in a ſtate of anarchy protection for that property which, they boaſted, gave them as large a ſhare of intereſt in the welfare of the country as others, and which might not be the caſe, if the preſent neceſſary meaſures of his Majeſty's Miniſters were not adopted. He reminded Mr. Curwen of having ſtated in a former debate, that thoſe clubs and ſocieties proceeded to ſuch an extent as to afford him ſome uneaſineſs; notwithſtanding which, he had that day expreſſed his fears for the Con-

ſtitution

ſtitution, when mild and neceſſary meaſures were taken in order to counteract their miſchievous intentions. Mr. Wallace declared, he would not ſay that any of the parties who aſſembled at Copenhagen-houſe, actually put the inſtrument into the hand of the miſcreant who attacked the Sovereign; but he would aſſert, that the language uſed at that Meeting was likely to influence and work on the minds of the ignorant, and was calculated to produce outrages againſt the laws. It was, he admitted, undeniable, that the beſt ſecurity of a Britiſh Sovereign was to live in the hearts of his people; and his preſent Majeſty, it was on all hands agreed, enjoyed in a pre-eminent degree the affection of his ſubjects; even that, however, could not protect him from the hand of the conſpirator, who, in aiming a blow at the King, aimed it alſo at every ſubject in the kingdom.

Mr. Whitbread pleaded guilty to the charge made againſt his Honourable Friend who made the motion, and confeſſed his object was merely to create delay, for the purpoſe of obtaining more Petitions againſt it in its preſent abominable ſhape. Happy was it for the country, that the Conſtitution of that Houſe had provided forms of deliberation, apparently with a proſpective apprehenſion of the neceſſity, in certain caſes, for delay. In thoſe forms, he, with his Honourable Friends, intended to intrench themſelves, and in thoſe forms they would defend their poſt againſt the paſſing of the Bills, in doing which, he believed, they ſhould alſo defend the liberties of the country. Every day, every hour, and every moment, that theſe Bills were delayed from paſſing into a law, was a day, an hour, and a moment preſerved to the freedom of the people. It had been ſaid, that the Petitions were obtained in an unfair manner; he denied the fact. Did they not ſpeak the ſentiments of the people of England? If they did not ſpeak the ſentiments of the people of England, what was it that made Miniſters ſo anxious to force the Bills upon them? They had, as far as they were enabled by their privilege of deliberation, by the reſult of that exerciſe, firmly perſuaded of the dangerous innovation of thoſe meaſures on the Conſtitution, manifeſted their abhorrence of the Bills. Some Gentlemen had argued, in his opinion, rather indecorouſly, that the Petitions did not ſpeak the ſenſe of thoſe people by whom they were ſigned; others, and among them a worthy Magiſtrate (Mr. Alderman Luſhington) had declared, in rather a ſarcaſtic tone, that they proceeded from the poor, and not from the rich. This was a ſcandalous and invidious diſtinction. In his opinion, the indigent had more at ſtake on the preſent occaſion than the opulent; the latter could find the way to redreſs, when the former were ſhut

out,

out, if not ſheltered by the Conſtitution in preſerving to them their inalienable right, the right of Petitioning. An Honourable Gentleman had ſpoken of the miſrepreſentations uſed to procure thoſe Petitions; but ſurely he had forgotten, at the ſame time, the miſrepreſentations of thoſe who ſupported the Bill. They miſrepreſented it when they aſſerted, that it was meant as a guard to defend and protect the liberties of the people: they knew that it was not only a daring attack upon thoſe liberties, but that ſuch was the purpoſe profeſſedly in view. Miniſters, if convinced that the meaſure needed only to be underſtood to be adopted, ſhould certainly agree to the motion, from a confidence, that when the people were convinced of the propriety and adequacy of the meaſure, they would ſupport Government by their Petitions. It had been inſinuated, that his Honourable Friend had diſcloſed his own intentions and thoſe of his Friends, by not wiſhing the Bill to go into a Committee, for the purpoſe of ſuffering it to come before the public in its original and natural garb. To this aſſertion he had no objection alſo to plead guilty. He confeſſed that he was deſirous it ſhould go forth to the world in all its natural deformity, to evince to the people what an alarming ſtretch of power Miniſters aimed at; and not to let it appear after it had been ſmoothed down, and faſhioned in conformity, in a great meaſure, to the ſucceſsful oppoſition it had experienced. The voice of the people had the deſired effect on Miniſters: he knew they wiſhed to abandon the meaſure altogether; they had, indeed, made it a nullity, and adhered to its form, becauſe they were determined to preſerve the ſhadow, merely, as they conceived, to ſuſtain their credit. He hoped, however, the futility of the tranſaction would not be ſoon forgotten.

They pretended that the Bills were calculated to ſecure the liberties and Conſtitution of the country. He was not ſurpriſed at ſuch pretences; he knew that it had been the practice of weak politicians, in all ages, while they were ſecretly undermining any inſtitution, to pretend that they were fixing it on a firmer baſis.—Had not the axe, the wheel, and the ſtake, he aſked, been uſed to enforce even the mild religion we profeſs? He had not the ſmalleſt heſitation in affirming that theſe Bills were of a ſimilar nature, and equal to one of the moſt deſpotic meaſures of the moſt accurſed tyrant upon earth. Inſtead of beholding the people proſper under a government of freedom, juſtice, and mercy, they would ſoon ſee them ſink under a government of tyranny, of perſecution, and of blood; aye, of blood; a government of blood! Was there no blood in the Bill? What did it tend to, but the ſhedding the

blood of his Majeſty's ſubjects, when upon ſuch ſlight grounds it enforced military execution? The Bill was, in his opinion, a ſevere Act: it had been introduced with a ſolemnity unuſual in the annals of this country; and if it were poſſible to heighten the ſolemnity of it, it was to be paſſed into a law without there having been one tittle of evidence produced, without the ſmalleſt ſhadow of neceſſity having been eſtabliſhed.

That was not all; it did not even extend to the purpoſes for which it was propoſed. A noble Peer, Lord Mornington, had quoted a number of indecent extracts from a variety of pamphlets; would the noble Lord or any of his Friends aſſert, that the Bill would impede the publication of ſuch pamphlets? Certainly not. An Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, that he could prove the neceſſity for thoſe coercive meaſures, and yet he voted againſt the proof, when he voted againſt the appointment of a Committee to eſtabliſh that proof he was poſſeſſed of. Where did this proof exiſt? In the notoriety? It was ſaid it was notorious, that doctrines were preached upon a certain day, in a certain public meeting, and that afterwards an outrage was committed, in which the preaching and the practice were connected. Was this reported ſo? No! Then the perſons who were employed to report what paſſed at that meeting did not do juſtice. The people who compoſed that public meeting contend that they have been calumniated, and offer to be heard by counſel. Until they who were ſo ready to refute, therefore, ſhall have been refuted, there can be no conviction. But the Houſe and the country is called upon to give faith to theſe aſſertions. Let the Houſe mark upon whom the faith of theſe aſſertions muſt depend: upon the Miniſters of the Crown. Was it not notorious that thoſe very Miniſters had before deceived the country? Was it not notorious that a part of them got into power by giving a vital ſtab to the Conſtitution; and was it not notorious that another part was the loudeſt to cry out upon it? Was it not notorious that they ſpread alarms of treaſon throughout the country which they could not prove? and, not to go through a ſtring of facts, did not their credulity, to call it by no worſe a name, endanger the life, liberties, and reputation, of a number of individuals, whom, after they have kept for ſeven months in confinement, they have been obliged to releaſe for want of proof? Every man who heard him, Mr. Whitbread ſaid, muſt be aware, that he alluded to thoſe unfortunate men, whoſe deplorable ſituation had ſo repeatedly been mentioned, and never contradicted, who had been ſeized, confined, and calumniated, on a charge of conſpiracy to

aſſaſſinate the King. Ought ſo groſs a calumny as the preamble of that Bill was upon the Societies to be ſuffered? He had heard it ſaid, that it was not a calumny, but a charge: theſe aſſertions were perfectly in the manner of the high inquiſition, and he ſhould not be ſurpriſed if the torture ſoon ſhould be adopted to force the accuſed to a confeſſion. [*A violent exclamation of No! No! No!*]

Mr. Whitbread declared it gave him ſome ſatisfaction to find that the ſenſations of the Houſe revolted at the idea of ſuch tyranny; he would aſk, however, if the London Correſponding Society had been guilty of ſuch acts as he ſhould not ſtand to defend, if they had gone to greater lengths than they ought to have done, and had tranſgreſſed againſt the Conſtitution, was it wiſe or prudent to brand them with infamy, and exclude them from the pale of Society? Ought they not rather to endeavour to bring them back to a proper love of the Sovereign and the Conſtitution? It had been ſaid, that the London Correſponding Society had at laſt condeſcended to addreſs the King, and petition that Houſe. Inſtead of ſuch ſarcaſtic remarks, would it not have been better to have received their Petition with cordiality and reſpect, and to have welcomed men once again to thoſe paths from which they had wandered? What were they going to do? They were going to puniſh the whole of his Majeſty's ſubjects for the indiſcretion of a few, and they would not allow the delay of one week to put ſtronger reſtrictions into execution. Did it defeat the purpoſe? Certainly not; for while they were deliberating they were ſurrounded by an army, and a military force was ready to march to any part of the metropolis the moment an attack ſhould be made. He would aſk the Right Hon. Gentleman, in the violence of his zeal, whether he wiſhed any additional power, and whether the enactment of the Bill could give it? He would aſk him alſo, whether there has been any tumultuous meetings in the metropolis of the kingdom to juſtify it? When he aſſumed theſe premiſes, what were the enactments? Such as, to uſe the words of his Right Hon. Friend, "if carried by the influence of a corrupt majority againſt the ſenſe of the great maſs of the people of England, and made a part of the practical Government of the country, reſiſtance will no longer be a queſtion of morality and duty, but of prudence."

An Honourable Gentleman had ſaid, theſe are not revolution doctrines, becauſe they were only uſed in reſiſting a tyrant; but he would not aſk by whom they were uſed, nor againſt what tyrant, for a tyranny cannot be leſs tyrannical, becauſe it is the tyranny of an Act of Parliament. The people of England were ſo much the

better then than at preſent, becauſe they were not made accomplices in their own oppreſſion, and becauſe they had not then, as at preſent, no redreſs but in the aſſertion of their own rights. Public meetings were ſaid to be open even if the Bill paſſed. That he denied. Suppoſe, for inſtance, the meeting the other day in the Common Hall had been poſterior to the paſſing of the Bill, and the members ſhould afterwards ſay, that the queſtion was not only not fairly ſtated, but that the ſtructure prevented it from being generally underſtood, could there be any doubt, when a weak or wicked Magiſtrate had been hooted by the populace, and made ſuch a declaration, that the people would have an opportunity to meet again?

To put another inſtance reſpecting a motion of an Honourable Gentleman, with whom he had then the only opportunity of concurring—for the abolition of the Slave Trade—if ſuch a Bill had been in force prior to the meetings in ſupport of that motion, would it not have been ſaid, that the Slave Trade was eſtabliſhed by Law, and that ſuch meetings were held for the purpoſe of introducing French anarchy and confuſion into the colonies? He knew not whether he ſhould tranſgreſs the forms of the Houſe, if he ſaid that Sheriffs were ſometimes notoriouſly picked out to anſwer the purpoſes of elections; and if ſuch a Bill be paſſed, might not Sheriffs be picked out every year to anſwer the purpoſes of a corrupt Adminiſtration? He denied alſo that it would not interfere with private families, for one enactment was, that a Magiſtrate might enter any Houſe where, upon information upon oath, he ſhall have reaſon to ſuſpect a ſeditious meeting or diſcourſe, upon which he would not, he ſaid, enlarge, as it was too obvious to need a comment.

Who could then ſupport a Bill liable to ſuch objections? Were they afraid of the Meeting at Copenhagen-houſe? If the Bill was not to operate as they aſſerted, ſuch meetings were not prohibited. How could rational beings ſtumble on ſuch abſurdities? Every meaſure of the preſent Miniſter, his involving the country in a diſaſtrous war, his defeats and diſgraces, the blunders of himſelf and his colleagues, and their prodigality, rendered them unpopular, but in no ſerious mind operated to the inſult of the Sovereign. The Bills, in fact, were calculated for the ſecurity of Miniſters, and not that of the King, on whom they meant to caſt the odium of their miſconduct and diſgraces. Who could read the atrocious libel pronounced by the Secretary at War, innocent in its nature, without perceiving that chain of facts which led to the preſent deſpotic

ſpotic meaſures? Who could ſee, without grief, a diſtinguiſhed leader in the preſent Cabinet, who was the principal cauſe of exciting the American war, and the calamities that followed? When the Jacobites attempted to aſſaſſinate King William, no ſuch laws were brought forward as the preſent. Engliſhmen ſhould recollect, that, at the cloſe of the American war, the corrupt Miniſters of the Crown were diſmiſſed, conformable to the voice of the people. He ſhould be glad to have part of the wickedneſs of theſe Bills taken away, rather than they ſhould be enacted in their preſent ſtate; but he abhorred the deteſtable principles of them completely. This was not all; he ſuſpected they were preparatory to more vigorous meaſures, ſince it had been already doubted by one of the Miniſters (Mr. Windham) whether they went to a ſufficient extent, and whether ſomething beyond them would not hereafter be found expedient. He thought, therefore, that they would be ſoon followed up by ſomething more arbitrary. The country, however, might remain ſtupified for a time; he truſted, nevertheleſs, that it was aſleep, not dead: the people would ſoon rouſe themſelves; and then the conſequence would be, that, either by one convulſive effort they would produce a revolution; or, if they do not rouſe themſelves, what has been ſo long propheſied will be fulfilled—The *Euthanaſia* of the Conſtitution.

Mr. W. Addington roſe, and argued in ſupport of the Bills: he ſaid, that however Gentlemen might at preſent declaim againſt the Bills, and boldly aſſert that they were ſubverſive of the Conſtitution, he begged to remind them, that it was by remedying evils occaſionally exiſting, that our anceſtors had been enabled to hand down that Conſtitution to their poſterity. The atrocious attack on his Majeſty, on which he was glad to find there was but one ſentiment, was not only an attack upon the King, but, conſidering the time and place, it was an attack alſo upon the Lords and Commons, and that attack apparently the effect of a dark, diabolical, and premeditated conſpiracy. Clubs and conſpiracies, it was never to be forgotten, had overturned the monarchy of France. What was it but a club that inſulted, impriſoned, and brought to the block, the unfortunate Louis XVI. If Gentlemen would look to France, they would ſee that the Convention which was erected by theſe clubs, had, by one of their laſt acts, overturned the whole of the club ſyſtem; and immediately after that overthrow followed the eſtabliſhment of a form of government, which, being in ſome meaſure founded upon reaſonable principles, enabled his Majeſty to ſtate from the Throne, the firſt day of the ſeſſion, the probability of treating with them. Deſtructive theſe clubs had been

in France, and destructive they promised to be in this country. What then did Government want? The Bills gave no power to the Executive Government, nor to the House of Lords or Commons: they had, indeed, placed a reliance on Magistrates for the purpose of procuring public peace; and whatever Gentlemen might say, there were no men in the country more to be respected, nor more independent, than the Magistrates in general. The Bill was not a Bill that looked to punishment, to pains and penalties; it was chiefly preventive in its object, preventive in its provisions; if it did not pass, in vain had the Legislature suspended the *Habeas Corpus* Act; in vain had they passed the Treasonable Correspondence Bill; in vain had they taken any measure to preserve the state. Mr. Addington concluded by declaring, that he thought the Bills could not have a more proper title, than that of the means of enabling Ministers to hand down to posterity the British Constitution whole and unimpaired.

Mr. Lambton began with declaring, that his attachment to the Monarchy was as strong as that of any man. He was ready to protect the Sovereign from every insult, for it was a duty coördinate with the Constitution; he had, however, other duties that were likewise co-ördinate, because they were connected together, and love to the one was inseparable from regard to the other. In his attachment to the King, he must include his duty to the Constitution. It was an edifice so delicate and beautiful in its construction, that if the smallest part was removed, the whole would totter and tremble to the foundation. Great as the loyal professions of some Gentlemen might be, the British Monarchy, they must admit, was founded on English liberty, and supported by the right of the people. This was a sentiment that "had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength." It was one that he hoped would go down with him to the grave, whether it remained locked up in his bosom, or whether he was permitted to enjoy the good old English custom of speaking his thoughts fairly and freely. The paltry documents brought forward by a noble Lord did not, he said, serve to convince him, that either Sedition or Conspiracy against the King existed; any fool or any spy could have written the book the noble Lord had introduced, but no man of common sense would have obtruded on the public what must have defeated his own object. If sedition did exist, he had the authority of the best lawyers for declaring, that the laws were sufficient to punish it. The present Bill appeared to him to be rather calculated to promote sedition, than to prevent it. Coercion ever made converts: and Voltaire had judiciously remarked, that the inquisition made

made more proſelytes than either Calvin or Luther. The preſent coercive meaſures would create, he was convinced, more diſciples than Thomas Paine, Joel Barlow, or the whole race of republican theoriſts. Since the year 1792, the meaſures of Adminiſtration had made more perſons diſaffected to the Government than the poiſon of French principles. If Miniſters really wiſhed to ſtop the progreſs of that diſcontent, they ought to employ the means ſuggeſted by his Honourable and Learned Friend (Mr. Erſkine); they ought to reſtore peace and plenty, which would ſilence the voice of diſcontent. They ought to remedy notorious abuſes, and reform the repreſentation. That, and that only, would be the way to put down Seditious Aſſemblies (as they were called), becauſe it would leave little to be complained of. Such meaſures would, he was perſuaded, have more weight than all the violent Bills, with rigorous penalties, that ingenuity could deviſe. A queſtion naturally preſented itſelf, Did Miniſters mean to conciliate or not? Their language to the people had been this: "We have involved you in a war which has been conducted without energy, waſted your blood and treaſure upon ſchemes with little ſucceſs, and leſs glory; but do not think we will bend or truckle for favour; apply anodynes to the wounds we have inflicted; behave peaceably; do not venture even to murmur, much leſs bounce; if you bark, we will ſilence you; if you bite, we will muzzle you; and if you ſhake your chains with anger and indignation at your oppreſſors, we will tranſport you to Botany Bay for a miſdemeanour, or hang you for high treaſon!"

It had, however, been ſaid, that there were precedents for ſuch meaſures. From what times were thoſe precedents ſelected? From the times of Queen Elizabeth, one of the moſt deſpotic, though one of the greateſt Monarchs that ever ſat on the Throne of Britain. It was the precedent of an act paſſed by an abject Parliament, whom ſhe prohibited under *ſevere penalties from deliberating on public affairs*, and whoſe Members ſhe arreſted on pretence of diſobedience to her will. Did Miniſters think the people would ſubmit to theſe Bills, or endure ſuch precedents? The Parliament of Charles II. had paſſed the Act, which was the other precedent, in the firſt effuſions of their zeal, the year immediately after the Reſtoration, amidſt the dread of a powerful unextinguiſhed faction. What was at that time ſecurity to the Throne, at this was treaſon to the Conſtitution. Mr. Lambton declared, that he had always underſtood that it was a maxim of the greateſt truth and authority, that tumults and diſcontents were rare under a good Government; and that when they took place, their cauſes might be traced to mal-admi-

adminiſtration. Complaint never hurt any but thoſe whoſe conſcience told them that they were guilty. If Miniſters wiſhed to leſſen the number of the diſcontented, inſtead of refuſing they would conſent to hear grievances explained. By treating them with contempt, they would drive the people to deſpair; and, to uſe the words of a celebrated writer, " might produce a few fits of the ague, which would leave behind a quotidian fever." He hoped they would agree that it was better to ſtop the diſorder, before it proceeded to any deſperate extremity.

What, he aſked, had been the boaſted difference between the Britiſh Conſtitution and the old deſpotiſm of France? It was this: In England, truth could not be concealed from the King, it made its way to his notice through the medium of a free preſs, and circulated through all the orders of the ſtate. In other countries, deprived of liberty, the avenues of public inveſtigation were locked up; no grievance, however acutely felt, could be complained of. With us there exiſted a right to aſſemble and conſider grievances, and obtain information, which might diſcover bad men; no ſuch right was experienced in deſpotic countries; their ſyſtem was ſo ordered that their rulers might cruſh thoſe who diſapproved of their meaſures; and conſign to the miſeries of famine, and the horrors of a dungeon, all who dared to murmur a complaint. How long might this enviable diſtinction remain? The right of Petitioning was paramount to all others. The force that tore it away might rob them of their property. It might be conſiſtent with the Government of Turkey or of Ruſſia, but not with the Conſtitution of England; he therefore cautioned Miniſters againſt trying the experiment. He objected particularly to the clauſe beſtowing ſo much diſcretionary power upon Magiſtrates, and enlarged upon the conſequences of it. The very reaſon of Petitioning required freedom of Petitioning. The Bill however took it away. It held out the ſemblance of a right, which could neither be touched nor felt.

They had been told, that no attempt would be made to prevent the exerciſe of Petitioning, were the Bill paſſed. It ought to be recollected, that the exerciſe of the power of Petitioners would then depend only on ſufferance; it would no longer be a right. A good Miniſter might not employ it; but what a dreadful engine did it furniſh to the views of a corrupt Adminiſtration! Suppoſe, for inſtance, that a Meeting of Diſſenters was ſummoned, to petition for the redreſs of ſome preſſing grievance, and that high church politics were the rage of the day, the Meeting might on a ſudden be pronounced illegal, the proceedings ſtopt by the attending Magiſtrate,

giſtrate, and, on refuſing to diſperſe, the aſſembly might be ſubject to military execution. Of all the attacks which had ever been made on the liberties of Engliſhmen, this was, in his opinion, the moſt daring, ruinous, and alarming. All the ſtretches of prerogative under Charles the Firſt, who loſt his head, and James the Second, who loſt his crown, were but pigmy ſteps when compared with the gigantic ſtrides of modern deſpotiſm. Ship-money, arbitrary exactions, and even the infamous Court of Star-Chamber, were trivial to it. Then the right of Petitioning exiſted, by which the people might remonſtrate. Had thoſe arbitrary ſteps been preceded by a Bill ſimilar to the preſent, they might have been executed with impunity. The Engliſh Conſtitution would have been ſwallowed up for ever. The real grievances from which the diſcontent aroſe, was the conduct and the practices of Miniſters.

Much abuſe had been laviſhed upon the political ſocieties in the kingdom; in his opinion, the grand grievance lay in the conduct of his Majeſty's Miniſters. They had given riſe to theſe ſocieties; they had created Jacobins; they had diffuſed diſcontent. His ſentiments he would not ſtate in his own words, but in thoſe of a diſtinguiſhed character who had given a juſt account of the origin of the diſcontent in the days of Charles the Firſt. Mr. Lambton then read a quotation from a celebrated ſpeech delivered in the Houſe in 1664, (Sir C. Ruddiman's) of which the following is an outline. "His Majeſty is much wiſer than thoſe who adviſe him. His Miniſters have tolled a deadly knell all over the kingdom, and inſpired the people with ſentiments of diſguſt and diſaffection. Let their conduct ſpeak, and let their actions diſcover them. They talked highly, indeed, of their concern for the intereſts of the country, but they mind nothing but their own. They have ſpent ſums of money, and waſted the blood of the nation, in the purſuit of ſchemes which terminated in miſcarriage and diſaſter. They act upon one pernicious counſel till they bring things to an extremity, and then they make this extremity the ground for their next proceeding." This, he ſaid, was preciſely the character of the preſent Miniſters. He did not accuſe them of a wicked and premeditated deſign to ſow diviſion in the country, and to eſtabliſh novel and dangerous diſtinctions between the different ranks in ſociety, but he was confident that ſuch had been the conſequence of their meaſures. He recommended it to them to deſiſt from this ruinous plan of policy, and to uſe conciliatory meaſures with the people, as long as conciliatory meaſures would be of uſe. At preſent they would not fail to cement all claſſes of perſons throughout the kingdom, and unite them againſt them. Were a poll to be

taken

taken throughout England on the queſtion of the continuance of Monarchy, he was convinced that there would ſcarcely be a difference of opinion. As far as his Majeſty was perſonally concerned, the people were unanimous in their attachment; but were a poll taken upon the continuance of Miniſters in their preſent ſituation, and upon the political expediency of the meaſures which they had juſt adopted, perhaps there might not be the ſame unanimity of ſentiment; that from what he underſtood of the opinion of the nation, the Miniſter and his friends had little to expect from ſuch a ſcrutiny, that would redound much either to their advantage or to their honour.

Mr. Grant ſaid, that ſuppoſing the aſſertions made uſe of by Gentlemen on the other ſide to be well grounded and true; that is to ſay, ſuppoſing it were true, that the meaſures in agitation trenched, in ſome degree, on the Conſtitution, it by no means followed, that they ought not in any poſſible caſe to be adopted. If, in caſe of an invaſion, meaſures of a ſimilar nature were deemed expedient, it would not be leſs unreaſonable than in the preſent caſe to attribute to them the ſame conſequences. It would be paradoxical indeed to ſay, that it was by the reſiſtance, and not the attack, that danger was produced. If the Bills, at preſent the ſubject of diſcuſſion, were brought forward in a time of Peace, merely as a ſpeculative improvement of the Conſtitution, he would not have the leaſt heſitation in rejecting them. He was by no means inclined to depreciate the benefits which reſulted to the people from their ancient privilege of aſſembling, deliberating, and expreſſing their ſentiments on any public meaſure. He knew that even Legiſlators ſometimes ſtood in need of certain checks and correctives, and that the voice of the people might and had been known to operate as a ſalutary controul. Gentlemen had gone but a very little way, indeed, in argument on the meaſure, when they ſhewed only that it was a reſtriction. All Government was a reſtriction laid on, not becauſe it was agreeable, but becauſe it was neceſſary; ſo that when Gentlemen objected to theſe Bills, that they would operate as a reſtraint, they only left the queſtion where they found it; for, by a parity of reaſoning, they might diſpoſe of all kind of ſocial reſtriction whatſoever, and argue back to a diſſolution of the very elements of Government. The ſole queſtion was, whether, when a meaſure, though not good in itſelf, was productive of good by preventing evil, it ſhould or ſhould not be adopted? No reſtraint was good in the abſtract; yet it ſometimes happened (and it was a part of the allotment of humanity) that men were obliged to recur to a leſſer evil for prevention of a greater: it was in fact im-

impoſſible for a free Conſtitution to eſcape unhurt from an attack made upon it under colour of its own principles; it muſt neceſſarily either fall under the attack, or be injured by that which was applied as its ſafeguard. Reſtrictions on Monarchical Governments were not very ſenſibly felt; but when any part of a community employed for its deſtruction a portion of rights and power enjoyed by all, there was great danger; and they would only have to chuſe between two difficulties, namely, whether they would endure the utmoſt evil that unreſiſted, unreſtrained power might bring, or lay reſtrictions on the whole, in order to prevent its ruin by the abuſe of a part.

It was one of the conditions of his ſtate here, that man hardly ever had in his power to make choice between goods; very ſeldom indeed to chuſe between good and evil; but when put into the trying ſituation of chuſing between two evils, it was then his reaſon and his fortitude were called forth into exertion, and his choice either depreſſed or elevated him above the ordinary level of his nature. In the preſent caſe, the neceſſity of chuſing was rendered more unpleaſant when, by reſorting to the remedy which wiſdom pointed out, they incurred the danger of offending thoſe who were ſo very warmly attached to the Conſtitution, as to view every thing that approached it with jealouſy, and who, in the fervour of their attachment to that object, would incur the danger of ruin to the whole of it, rather than ſuffer a temporary encroachment upon a part; ſtill more unpleaſant was it rendered, if, as had been obſerved, pains were taken to miſrepreſent the intention of thoſe who attempted it. Yet, under thoſe difficulties, would it be right to abſtain wholly from the attempt? Should they be deterred, under ſuch circumſtances, from the adoption of that which they thought right?

Into this dilemma, which he confeſſed was an arduous one, the Houſe were led by the principles of certain ſocieties; principles the growth of France, tranſplanted into Britiſh ſoil, but which, he was ſure, never would find their way into that Houſe. Thoſe principles, ſo far from being congenial, were hoſtile to the Conſtitution, and ridiculed it as a ſyſtem of ſlavery; held that our Government was an uſurpation of the rights of the people, the adminiſtration of it altogether corrupt; and that, if even the Legiſlature ſhould agree to the favourite project of reform, it was an act of uſurpation in them to attempt it. Under the influence of thoſe French principles, the Britiſh ſocieties, and their numerous adherents, entertained a gloomy and fanatical averſion to every thing Engliſh, threw contempt upon our fleets and armies, deſpiſed and maligned the

the courage of Engliſhmen, and even affected to doubt it. While every thing that bore a reſemblance to Engliſh became an object of their averſion, even the American Conſtitution, democratic though in fact it was, was reprobated, becauſe it bore ſome reſemblance to that of Great Britain, and had paid too much regard to property, and too much reſpect to religion. Nay, the preſent Conſtitution of France itſelf, inaſmuch as it was ſuppoſed to bear ſome faint reſemblance to the Britiſh, fell into utter diſgrace with them on that account. Thus the ſocieties felt, and thus they expreſſed themſelves while they were let alone; but no ſooner did they find Parliament were preparing to repreſs their preſumption and miſchievous projects by a coercive law, than they turned ſhort round, changed their tone, and flew into the arms of that Conſtitution which but the day preceding they deſpiſed, vilified, and denied the exiſtence of; attributing to its perfections more than ever had been to be found in any human inſtitution, and extolling its principles of liberty to that romantic and extravagant exceſs, that it contained within itſelf that freedom which was to be its own deſtruction. To that ſituation, Mr. Grant ſaid the arguments on the other ſide were reducible, that if they were founded in reaſon, nothing was to be done which could be attended with the ſlighteſt temporary inconvenience. Perhaps, the Gentlemen had ſome ſecret to impart, ſome new mode of legiſlating, by which every good might be attained without its concomitant evil, every advantage gained without ſome ſacrifice; the Conſtitution be preſerved from utter ruin, without weakening it in any of its parts; and, in the preſent caſe, be left as perfect as it was before, after a law ſuitable to the demands and neceſſity of the time ſhould be paſſed. If the Gentlemen were poſſeſſed of ſuch a ſecret, it was unknown to him; and the diſcloſure of ſuch a novelty in legiſlation could not fail of being ſatisfactory to the Houſe.

In many great ſtates it had been found neceſſary to recur to the moſt unlimited agency, and to yield to a temporary ſuſpenſion of all the powers and privileges of the people, for great and important purpoſes. To this extent, however, he hoped, and was ſure, England would never have occaſion to recur. It was, however, a principle which had never been diſputed, that it was fit to ſurrender a ſmall portion of freedom for a time, in order to ſave the remainder of the whole. For his part, he would again repeat, that he did not hold out this as a ſpeculative improvement; on the contrary, he was convinced it was, to a certain degree, an evil in itſelf, and an infringement on the Conſtitution. Theoriſts in France had firſt maintained and acted on the propoſition, that all power lay in the

the people, and that the people could not diveft themfelves of it; but they had at length arrived at fuch a period of political improvement, as to hold, that when once the people had delegated their authority, no part of it remained behind with them; that to affemble for the redrefs of grievances, was an unlawful reaffumption of their power; and that only an individual had a right to petition. Having never followed their theory in the firft propofition, he would not in the fecond; a Legiflature might, according to his judgment, deviate from its original purpofes, while meetings of the people had this falutary effect, that whatever inequality there might be in their elective rights, it was amply counterbalanced by their right to meet and to petition.

There was no country in the world, he was convinced, in which the direct fenfe of the people had greater effect or weight than in Great Britain. He would, therefore, never think of propofing to infringe upon that power, even an atom's length, for any purpofe lefs than the prefervation of the bulk of that power. Gentlemen, indeed, had faid, that we were not reduced to the hopelefs neceffity of reforting to any fuch remedy; it was, however, found that the Correfponding Society affiliating with France, was diffeminating feditious principles, and carrying them as far as they could in effect; was it not then their duty to prevent them? Would Gentlemen fay, that rather than refort to a mode of prevention, trenching in a fmall degree on the Rights of the People, they would leave thefe focieties at liberty to work the ruin of the Conftitution?

Some Gentlemen had faid, that there were already laws exifting to punifh fedition; he was aware there were laws to punifh it in folitary individuals; but were there laws ftated to the prefent occafion, when fedition was carried on by thoufands upon fyftem? He fancied the laws were inadequate to meet them all by fingle indictments. If, in conformity with the advice of one Gentleman on the other fide, profecutions were fet on foot, an Honourable Friend of his would fay, "No: multiplied punifhments produce multiplied evils."

How then were they to act? If the exifting laws were to be thrown on the fhelf, what then? Why, "*conciliate*," fays another Gentleman (Mr. Lambton), and thus they were to be made the fport of various and contradictory opinions. For his part, he hoped he did not arrogate too much to himfelf, when he faid that no man more admired lenity, or more fteadily believed in the happy effects of it, than himfelf: but lenity muft depend on circumftances; and though there were very few, there certainly were

ſome caſes where it could not poſſibly produce any good effect; for the Houſe muſt keep in mind that, in conciliatory meaſures, there muſt always be ſomething to concede. In the conteſt with America, had lenient meaſures been adopted in time, it would probably have been attended with the moſt beneficial and happy conſequences to the two countries; and it was under that impreſſion that many perſons to whom the country looked up with the greateſt veneration earneſtly recommended it. In the difference which we had with Ireland, lenity and forbearance became adviſeable; as the conceſſion of a free trade, whatever might be the right, was wiſely acceded to, in order to preſerve the affections of that nation. What, however, did theſe ſocieties require? Nothing leſs than the ſurrender of our religion, our property, and the whole of our Conſtitution. That they demanded the deſtruction of the Conſtitution was obvious: he did not miſrepreſent the fact, when he ſaid ſo. None who profeſſed the principles of Mr. Paine, and held them out for approbation and practice, could think they had any duty relative to the Conſtitution but to deſtroy it, as an uſurpation, and a ſyſtem not only inexpedient, but unlawful.

When firſt French politics were imported into England, the opinion was, that the Rights of Man were paramount to, and muſt take place of all other principles; and that the will of the majority was to decide againſt the dictates of judgment and underſtanding; that is to ſay, that however ignorant, unlettered, and void of intellect the majority might be, an inferior number, compoſed of men of wiſdom, learning, and experience, muſt yield to them: this was the favourite doctrine; it was rebellion to argue againſt it, becauſe it was the *will of the people*. They ſoon found, however, that the will of the people was in favour of the Conſtitution. They directly altered their ſyſtem, choſe to forget their principle of the right of majority, and it no longer remained a queſtion of *will*, but of *right*; that is to ſay, certain innate, natural rights, belonging to, inherent, and inſeparable from man; namely, univerſal ſuffrage and annual parliaments: and if there were only one hundred perſons in favour of it, and the reſt of the nation againſt it, it was tyranny in the majority to controvert the right. What conciliation then, he aſked, could take place, when there was nothing to concede but their whole demand, the annihilation of the Conſtitution? "Let the Honourable Gentleman (ſaid Mr. Grant) who has juſt ſat down, and who propoſed concilitary meaſures (Mr. Lambton) open the negociation; and let him ſee whether he can compromiſe for leſs than univerſal ſuffrage and annual parliaments." Was the Houſe quite prepared for the purpoſes of con-

conciliation, to difregard the will of the people, and impofe on all the reft that mode of Government, in order to fatisfy the few who demanded it? Suppofing this effected, had the Honourable Gentleman no other difficulties to encounter? They might fay that they were willing to let the monarchy alone; but it was not matter of choice with them; for their great oracle, Paine, had laid it down, that hereditary monarchy was not lawful; fo that if the fuffrage of the whole body of the people was for monarchy, there was no fecurity againft the attack of any ten men. Nay, Paine had afferted, that, in that point, they had not only no right to bind pofterity, but had no right to bind themfelves; for fo great was the abfurdity of monarchy, that even the fovereignty of the people was not competent to effect or give it force.

The only way, then, to conciliate, was to leave them to deftroy the Conftitution. Could any man point out fpecific terms of conceffion in fuch a cafe? Did the States of Germany conciliate with the Anabaptifts, who claimed univerfal dominion on the rights of faints, as this body claimed the Government of the country on the principles of the rights of man? No. When the defcendants of the Saints had recourfe to arms, they were fubdued by the Princes, and had fince become as peaceable and fubmiffive fubjects, as if they had never dreamed of fuch abfurd and extravagant demands. Gentlemen had faid, this was not a cafe of fo much urgency as to ftop the freedom of action; they could neverthelefs not fail to fee their danger. That danger had been characterifed in the refolutions of both Houfes: the evidence, which grounded them, fhewed that the conduct of thofe Societies tended to the diffolution of fociety; and the Houfe had their own (the Societies) authority that they were purfuing dangerous plans, not only with induftry, but with fuccefs. He would not enter into a nice inveftigation of the facts, but fay, that circumftances of notoriety concurred to point out the danger.—Upon the fame foundation the Committee adopted, he went. If the furrender to be made was equal to the value gained, the fituation was truly deplorable: Gentlemen would fee then the advantages of interference, before the ripened mifchief made the point to be gained more precarious, and the facrifice greater; they who would wait to let it ripen would, if in France in 1792, fay thus, "do not interrupt the Jacobins, let them go on till they do fome mifchief, and then punifh them." And the morning of the 1ft of Auguft would be the firft effort to rebut their wicked machinations.

He would not, he faid, fo far impofe upon the people, as to fay that this meafure took nothing from them. He would, on the

 contrary,

contrary, fay, that it took that which he would not take, if he could avoid it; but it by no means merited the terms ufed by Gentlemen on the other fide, that it was a furrender of the Conftitution, and left nothing worth enjoyment; that was a grofs miftake. The right to Petition was not a part of the Conftitution; it was nothing in itfelf, but only a means to obtain an end; an inftrument to operate on the Legiflature. It was furely better to give it up alone, than to give up both it and the Conftitution together; if the Conftitution went, it would be folly to fuppofe the right to Petition would remain. Were all the benefits of the Conftitution lapped up in this one right? No! Eftimate it as highly as Gentlemen could, it was nothing when put in competition with liberty and conftitutional happinefs. Let the lofs of the Conftitution and its guard be compared with the lofs of the guard alone, and then let them determine on their choice. If he over-rated the danger, Gentlemen who thought fo fhould ftate their eftimate of it: that, however, they ftudioufly avoided; and whenever the fubject naturally led to that point, they flew off from it to incidental topics. Not one Gentleman on the other fide had given his opinion on the quantum of the danger. Could the exiftence of large bodies of men, uniting in a confpiracy, and drawing in all the incidental bad humours of the State to bear againft the Conftitution, be denied? Could they be laudable, good, or free from dangers? Would a revolution be a benefit? If thofe Societies were purfuing laudable ends, why were they not encouraged? If the contrary, why fhould they not be refifted? What undefined, ftrange principle of action muft that be, which neither merited applaufe, nor called for refiftance? He hoped Gentlemen would candidly fay, under which of thofe claffes they fhould be ranked. Gentlemen had faid that the prefumptions of guilty intentions in thofe Societies had undergone a judicial difcuffion, and held out a verdict as a proof that no danger exifted: for his part, he had always ftudioufly avoided that fubject, and would not difcufs whether verdicts had the operation of merely exempting from punifhment or reftoring to innocence; but furely no one would contend, that, becaufe twelve men gave an opinion, the Houfe fhould abandon all legiflative judgment? Would it not be monftrous, if, when the ftate of the people called aloud for their protection againft thofe numerous Societies, they fhould anfwer, "We muft do nothing, becaufe twelve men have declared three of the Society not guilty, and therefore there can be no danger to fubmit to ruin! We cannot fave you!" To this height, extravagant as it was, he maintained, the arguments of Gentlemen on the other fide carried it.

The

The next mode of getting rid of the ſubject adopted by Gentlemen was ſaying, " diſcontent and diſaffection are the natural conſequences of the meaſures of Adminiſtration, the war, &c." On that he would ſay a word, and anſwer the argument by a ſimple queſtion, " Did the proceedings of thoſe ſocieties, or did they not, begin before the war? Did they not begin when there was no other ground of complaint or grievance but the Conſtitution itſelf? Yet this was compared to the time of Charles I. who, by making innovations, was deſtroying the Conſtitution, and would have left no liberty; and thereby raiſed diſturbances, which he endeavoured to prevent by harſh puniſhments. It was not for protecting, but for invading the Conſtitution, that he incurred national reſentment: but it was the refuſal of the Parliament to innovate and deſtroy the Conſtitution, which afforded matter of complaint and grievance to thoſe ſocieties. And while Gentlemen inſiſt that the chief criminality of Miniſters, which fomented thoſe diſturbances, was, that they had thrown the nation into war when in a ſtate of unexampled proſperity, they forget that it was in the midſt of that proſperity that thoſe ſocieties began their attacks on Government.

It had been ſaid, that Miniſters had acted inconſiſtently in alarming the Houſe about danger, after having ſtated, in the Speech from the Throne, that the people were quiet. Before he ſpoke to this, he muſt obſerve, that there was a faſhion grown up of late, that made it impoſſible to ſtate a ſober propoſition, without fencing and guarding it round with all its meanings and definitions. Miniſters had ſtated that the people were loyal, but that did not argue that there might not be one or more diſcontented. If a man ſtated that there was a conſiderable degree of diſaffection in thoſe factious ſocieties, then the conſtruction of Government was, that the whole body of the people was diſaffected, the whole nation libelled, and all were to be deprived of their freedom. Each of thoſe, however, were nevertheleſs true in a reaſonable extent. It was certainly true that the great body of the people were well affected to the Conſtitution; did it however follow, that, becauſe the number of the diſaffected was ſmall, the majority ſhould not take meaſures to prevent the miſchievous effects of their diſaffection? That was the very condition in which ſtrong meaſures ſhould be taken: this was a point inſiſted upon on a ſimilar occaſion by the firſt philoſopher and ſtateſman of Rome, who ſaid that a body of conſpirators, of very ſmall number, when compared with the bulk of the people, might ſhake the empire to its foundations.

France, alſo, afforded an uſeful leſſon, how ſmall a portion of men had there produced the moſt ruinous effects. Paine himſelf ſtated, that the firſt perſons who ſet on foot the Revolution were no more than ſeven, ſo deſpicable in talents, character, and power, as not to be thought worth reſiſtance.

If thoſe ſocieties proceeded on the model of their predeceſſors, the Jacobins of Paris, and followed up their plans, they would eradicate all regard for the Conſtitution, and deſtroy reſpect for every ſpecies of authority; not merely the authority of place and office, but the authority annexed to men of talents, who are as much the ſtrength of the State, as any who derived authority from artificial inſtitutions. It would, indeed, be lamentable, if ſuch made a party againſt itſelf; as it would be ridiculous to think, that if they could get the diſaffected to go certain lengths, they might then throw them off. Such men ſhould recollect, for their own inſtruction and guidance, that if all that was wiſe, great, and virtuous in human nature, roſe up on one ſide, and the wretched libeller Marat, on the other, ſaid to the people, "Be on your guard againſt the ariſtocracy of talents and wealth; you cannot ſuſpect me, who have neither talents nor views of ariſtocracy;"—all would ſink before him. To that ſtate, he ſaid, it was poſſible we might be brought. A Right Honourable Gentleman, of the moſt ſplendid talents, had, to be ſure, ſaid, that Engliſh minds were ſo conſtituted as to reſiſt ſuch examples; he believed he was, to a certain extent, right: but though they might be able, for ſome time, they could not be expected to reſiſt a conſtant addreſs to the paſſions, when aſſailed in the moſt flattering way; not in the way of obedience to power, but of rights and reſiſtance to uſurpation.

The very evils incident to life were attributed to Government. Human nature itſelf might be brought into contempt, if its foul ſide was always produced, and its fair ſide put in the ſhade; and for thoſe innovators he would ſay, that Swift's deſcription of the Yahoos was as fair a repreſentation of human nature, as the Correſponding Society's deſcription was of the Conſtitution. Keep out of ſight all that is beautiful and excellent, and the beſt work of creation might appear foul and deteſtable. If thoſe Societies and Lectures were permitted to proceed farther, he would venture to predict, that the natural diſpoſition of the Engliſh mind would undergo a complete and fatal change. The faſcination of the kind he complained of, however ſlow, was inevitable in its effects. It had, indeed, been alleged, that there was a great diſparity between the French and Engliſh characters, and from this the concluſion was drawn

drawn, that however ſimilar the cauſes, the effects could not poſſibly be the ſame. He was ready, as well as happy, to admit the diſparity of their characters; but he was far from being ſure that the worſt effects might not be produced, by men of great rank and character attempting to purſue public objects ſucceſsfully by the aſſiſtance of the multitude. The multitude, he believed, were ſeldom harangued with ſo much ſucceſs, as when the ſpeakers addreſſed themſelves to their ruling paſſions, when they attributed their inferior ſtations in life to the grindings of oppreſſion, aſcribed every incidental evil, to which human nature is expoſed, to the errors and wickedneſs of the Government, and, without ever adverting to their duties, inflamed them with extravagant notions of their rights.

France, he ſaid, like the ſocieties in queſtion, at one time entertained ſo high a notion of metaphyſical theories in Government, that ſhe erected an edifice of her own, in contempt of thoſe muſty fabrics, projected and matured by the experimental wiſdom of ages. So greatly had this ephemeral production been admired and applauded in this country, that, three years ſince, he ſhould have been cenſured by ſome Gentlemen, and thought too ſanguine, if he had ventured to predict that it would not outlive the old and venerable fabric of the Britiſh Conſtitution. They even then theorized upon theories, and tried the wonderful exerciſe of the Rights of Man, building their Conſtitution upon the ſovereignty of the people, and the will of the majority. They ſuppoſed, that if the maſs of a nation was aſſembled, and the people of wiſdom, experience, ſenſe, and erudition, ranged upon one ſide, with the fooliſh, the giddy, and the idle, oppoſed to them on the other, if the latter was more numerous, their will ſhould be obeyed. As it might well have been foreſeen, this experiment had only proved the futility of ſuch theories; and yet Gentlemen would ſtill perſiſt in encouraging ſuch abſurd as well as miſchievous opinions.

Mr. Grant, in glowing colours, deſcribed the miſeries which thoſe ſymptoms had produced in France: the oppreſſion of the people; the dethronement, impriſonment, and ſubſequent murder of the monarch; the expulſion of the clergy; and the extinction of religion, which he wiſhed the Gentlemen on the other ſide to weigh well in their minds. Conſidering the Bill as a meaſure of protection, and not of prohibition, at leaſt in the ſtricteſt and worſt meaning of that word, he ſaid he ſhould vote againſt the motion. He apologized to the Houſe for having been led into much greater length than he originally intended, by the various

ideas that had fuggefted themfelves as the different topics came under his review, and reminded the Houfe, that, although he thought it right to fupport the Bills, he admitted them to be an infringement; though he was convinced that they would operate, not, as was faid, as a ruinous reftriction upon the Conftitution, but as a falutary protection of that glorious fabric.

Mr. Fox faid, he had liftened with fincere pleafure, in common with every man in the Houfe, to the able and eloquent fpeech delivered by the Learned Gentleman who had juft fat down. He refpected the talents of that Learned Gentleman, and admired his ingenuity. Nor did he mean any thing in the leaft difrefpectful to the mafterly difplay of both, which he had made on the prefent occafion, when he faid, that though his fpeech was full of argument, and replete with eloquence, a man might fafely fubfcribe to every ftatement he had brought forward, and every conclufion he had drawn, and yet vote againft the prefent Bill.

The ingenuity of the Honourable Gentleman had, indeed, made no inconfiderable impreffion upon the Houfe; though his arguments feemed not fo much to bear on the principle of the Bill under immediate difcuffion, as on the general policy of Legiflation. He felt the difficulty therefore in replying to a fpeech of that nature. Able and extenfive as it had been, he was not in the leaft difpofed, nor did he believe any fober politician would be inclined to controvert the principles laid down by the Honourable Gentleman in the beginning of his fpeech. His pofition was, that, at a time of confiderable danger, it was proper to give up part of the Conftitution, in order to fecure the remainder. That maxim, abftractedly confidered, was incontrovertible: before it could have any weight however, when applied in a practical view, it was neceffary to prove the exiftence of the danger, its extent and magnitude; it would alfo be neceffary to fhew, that the remedy called for was exactly a furrender of that portion of the Conftitution which it might be proper to facrifice, and not more than the value of the object to be fecured. The degree of conftraint which Government was to impofe, could be the only ground of doubt and difference of opinion. That Government was in its application a fyftem of reftraint upon human action, was clear and undeniable. It was important, however, to confider well the quantity and the quality of the reftraint which circumftances might require.

The Honourable Gentleman had complained, that it was the temper of the times to take every general principle as meant to

 apply

apply universally, and to fasten upon the person who employed it all the absurd consequences which might arise from such an application. He admitted the truth of the observation, and was convinced that no man had better reason to complain than himself. The Honourable Gentleman had accused Gentlemen on that side of the House of wishing to produce this dilemma—either that the people were animated by an universal spirit of loyalty, or that they were inflamed with a spirit of disaffection. He had never said that the people were completely harmonious in their political sentiments or opinions, or that no discontent prevailed. It had, however, been often stated on his side of the House, and he would call upon the Honourable Gentleman to say, whether he believed the spirit of dissatisfaction was greater or less at present than it had been previous to the war? He had never stated, because he had never believed, that the state of public affairs was wholly without danger. If it was allowed to be greater, to what cause was the increase to be attributed? He was surely entitled to presume that it was occasioned by the discontents excited by an impolitic and unjust war; by the measures of a corrupt, incapable Administration; and that it was ascribeable to the complicated miseries arising from the decay of commerce, and the pressure of famine, into which the country had been plunged. The war then had produced an effect directly the reverse of that stated by Ministers themselves as the chief reason for triumphing in its success. If, on the other hand, the ground of apprehension was less, why were the sacrifices required for public security to be increased? He asked pardon of the House for the repetition in which he indulged; but when the same arguments came from the opposite bench, and the same objections were offered to Gentlemen on his side of the House, he could not forbear repeating that material question.

With regard to the point of danger, of which the Honourable Gentleman was so anxious to have a specific declaration of his sentiments, he had always stated, that some discontent existed, which might not be unworthy of attention, but which would never justify the legislative remedies proposed. The Honourable Gentleman had affected to treat as a paradox the observation of his Honourable Friend, (Mr. Lambton,) that the danger of an attack was often created by the injudicious mode of defence. If it was a paradox however, it was one of those which frequent experience proved to be true. Who could deny that many political evils were rendered desperate by the absurd methods pursued to remedy or to remove them. Was the Honourable Gentleman so much more of a Whig than himself, as to impute the whole evils of the

 civil

civil wars, and the refiftance to Charles I. to which the nation owed its liberties, to the conduct of that ill-fated Monarch? Did the Honourable Gentleman believe all thefe calamities were to be afcribed to the illegality of fhip-money, or of various other acts of that Prince? Had there not been at that time a body of perfons previoufly inimical to the Conftitution? and was not the attack upon the Monarchy rendered formidable, and even tragical, in the event, by the rigorous meafures which rendered the breach irreparable? The Honourable Gentlemen had alfo mentioned the cafe of the Americans. When that unfortunate difpute was firft agitated, and when he heard fcraps of pamphlets, and papers, read, to prove that there was a fettled defign formed, to fhake off the connection with this country, he had never been fo unqualified a fupporter of America, as to affert, that no fuch defigns were entertained. He was convinced, however, that thofe who had conceived the project of feparating from the mother country were few indeed. By injurious attempts to remedy the evils then complained of, the cataftrophe which they were intended to prevent was realized.

That Honourable Gentleman had recurred to the fallacy fo often anfwered, of which Gentlemen on his fide were accufed, that they afcribed the difcontents to the meafures of his Majefty's Minifters. The Honourable Gentleman afked, did not thefe difcontents exift before the war, to which much of the difcontent was imputed, had been commenced? Here again he would recall the two examples he had already employed. In the times of Charles the Firft there might have exifted caufes of diffatisfaction, which, neverthelefs, the extravagant pretences of that Prince, and the impolicy of his Minifters, in urging them, carried to that height which proved fo fatal to themfelves. At one period a compromife with America was practicable, but the opportunity of conciliation was loft, and the defperate fyftem purfued in this country for ever cut off all hopes of that compromife being effected.

It had been faid, that much danger was to be apprehended from that party hoftile to the Conftitution drawing to itfelf all the difcontented perfons of the country. If the ftrength of this party depended upon the difcontent which a bad Government produced, and as the worft Adminiftration neceffarily would occafion the moft difcontent, he would defy any man to deny that a great part of the ill humour arofe from the bad conduct of Minifters. If the difcontented were compofed of two kinds, thofe who were enemies to the Conftitution, and thofe who, from a fpirit of difcontent, joined their party and encreafed its number, correct the abufes which had been

been ſo much the ſubject of complaint, introduce moderation and œconomy in the public expenditure, and baniſh that corruption which had crept into the repreſentative body; ſuch a proceeding would ſeparate thoſe from the diſaffected who were diſpleaſed with abuſes, and at the ſame time reconcile thoſe to the Conſtitution who had been alienated by its defects.

The Honourable Gentleman, in animadverting on what had been ſaid to come from Gentlemen on his ſide, had only engendered a monſtrous doctrine to ſhow his dexterity in demoliſhing it. It had never been ſaid, much leſs contended, that the verdict of Juries on the State Trials had proved that no ſeditious practices exiſted, but merely that the traitorous conſpiracy was proved to be ill-founded. He had no heſitation to declare, that he conſidered the verdict of the Jury on that point to be of more weight than the report of the Secret Committee. The Honourable Gentleman had attempted to point out an inconſiſtency between the language at preſent held, and that which they had heard upon the Report of the Secret Committee. The Honourable Gentleman likewiſe had confounded a variety of circumſtances, and, from the reſult of his own combinations, endeavoured to fix on his ſide of the Houſe that inconſiſtency which he had firſt invented, and then urged as a charge of inconſiſtency.

With regard to the degree of danger the Honourable Gentleman imputed to the Correſponding and other Societies, principles which he charged upon no authority, it was impoſſible to believe that, among the whole, there was a majority unfavourable to Monarchy. They might, indeed, have profeſſed to maintain the doctrine of Annual Parliaments, and Univerſal Suffrage: theſe principles, however, were not borrowed from the French; they had been inculcated in diſcourſes and writings by reſpectable characters in Great Britain many years ſince; and if they contained the evil imputed to them, the French might complain, with more juſtice, that they had been imported into France from this country. Thoſe ſocieties, the Honourable Gentleman had obſerved, muſt have ſome determinate object; either they were deſerving of encouragement, or of diſapprobation. Could there, he exclaimed, be no diviſion of men, or opinions, which they might overlook, without being cenſured for their approbation, or accuſed for their neglect? Muſt the intolerance of French politics be adopted, which permits no minority but which proceeds to violence, bloodſhed, and extermination? There were many opinions which it was indifferent to approve, or to condemn; and the dilemma which the Honourable Gentleman employed was the moſt abſurd and ridicu-

lous

lous that had ever been framed. Was a man bound to attack every opinion different from his own? He had never been an advocate for Annual Parliaments, yet that opinion had been avowed and maintained at various periods within this century. By the Tories it was held as a favourite doctrine; and it had been said that the restoration of that system was a part of the plan of politics taken up in the beginning of the present reign, though that condition had never been observed. Instead, then, of attempting to legislate on this subject, it would be most proper to allow the public to judge for themselves, and trust to the good sense of the English nation. He had stated all his opinions; he had never evaded an explicit declaration. It was now to be considered how far the Bill was applicable to the object it professed to have in view. If Englishmen had been seduced from their attachment to the Constitution, how could it be restored by the present Bills? Meetings might, indeed, be put a stop to, but a total communication of sentiment could not be prevented. The intercourse of the mind would remain. If there were, as represented by the Honourable Gentleman, something so fascinating in the opinions it was to proscribe, the prospect was indeed alarming. Good God, Sir! said Mr. Fox, in such a case what must be the horrors of our situation, when, in addition to its other evils, this detestable Bill, strong as the measure is, is found to be inadequate to its purpose?

The Honourable Gentleman had, he observed, treated with a degree of contempt an opinion of his Honourable Friend (Mr. Sheridan), that the difference of habits, government, and character, would prevent the people of this country from ever sinking into the horrors to which the French, unprepared for freedom, had been exposed. Did the Right Honourable Gentleman think that the negroes of the Plantations, or the subjects of Russia, Turkey, or Germany, were capable of that liberty with which an Englishman might be indulged? It was not fair, therefore, to reason from Frenchmen to Englishmen, or to argue that in such dissimilar circumstances the same events would take place. Was the Honourable Gentleman correct in his information concerning the French Revolution? The effects of the Jacobin club produced, perhaps, terrible effects upon minds not prepared for so great a change. Yet many of those events, to which their future disasters were owing, such as the depriving the Clergy of their lands, and the Nobility of their titles, took place previous to the establishment, at least to the credit and authority of the Jacobin club.

The Learned Gentleman had stated, that the whole of the confusion which had desolated France had arisen from the Jacobin

clubs;

clubs; that the number of them were few, and that the original Republican club in Paris consisted only of seven members, and that they afterwards produced the Revolution of the 10th of August, 1792. Would that Learned Gentleman seriously say, he believed it rational to frame a legislative provision which was to affect a whole nation, with respect to the most important part of its rights, on the ground of the determination of seven persons? The Revolution in France was not to be accounted for in that manner, nor was that the period at which they were to date its commencement. When then was the period? What was the cause of the Revolution of the 10th of August, 1792? Be it remembered that he was no advocate for the conduct of the Jacobins; no liberal man would accuse him of it; though he knew he must put up with that ill-founded charge from others. Let them enquire into the cause of the success of the Jacobins in France; such an enquiry was necessary, in order to be able to follow the arguments of the Learned Gentleman upon that subject. He would say then, that they were concluding irrationally indeed, if they said it was owing entirely to the doctrine of the Jacobins that the horrors of that day were exhibited, or that they were the cause of the dreadful catastrophe of the late unfortunate Monarch of that country; a Prince whose cruel fate might induce them to overlook the errors of his reign. In fact his fate was in a great degree owing to his avowed connection with the nobility of that country; a nobility whose views were hostile to the interests of the people.

He believed the King and his Ministers were guilty of planning what was attempted at that time against the people. Supposing even that they were not, he would ask, was not the suspicion that they were guilty, a great cause of the Revolution of the 10th of August, 1792? At that time the King's brother had left him; and the situation of his family, and their connection with the House of Austria, then known to be enemies to the Government of France, were so well ascertained, that their objects could not be doubted. Did not these circumstances give ample room for suspicion, on the part of the French, as to the intentions of the King, and those Ministers by whose council he was so fatally guided? If this were admitted, he had a right to say, that the catastrophe was no more accelerated by the wickedness of those who attacked, than by the baseness and folly of those who defended.

The Learned Gentleman had observed, that if he had said some years ago, that the then Constitution of France would not last so long as our own, he should, by many, have been treated as a person who spoke in a very visionary and idle manner. In what company

pany that Gentleman had been, or from whofe fentiments he formed that conjecture, Mr. Fox faid, he did not know; if the Learned Gentleman had alluded to him, he had never faid any thing like it; on the contrary, he had always entertained and profeffed a different doctrine. Would any man affert, that although he had often faid, that the firft French Revolution was a glorious event, he had afferted, that the fyftems which had been built upon that Revolution were good? So far from it, the moft moderate of them appeared to him to be unftable at leaft. That was his opinion; and the Right Honourable Gentleman oppofite to him knew it to be fo; in one particular inftance, he had emphatically fo pronounced it. He meant to allude to a motion made for a Reform of Parliament. On that occafion, he had ftated it as his opinion, and he had not changed it, that an old edifice, well altered and repaired, was more likely to be durable, than one built on an entirely new conftruction, of the ftructure of which they had no experience. That was his opinion then, and it was his opinion at the prefent; the Learned Gentleman's allufion to opinions, therefore, if directed to him, was unfairly directed, and the farcafm ill applied.

The reft of the Learned Gentleman's fpeech was what was commonly called pathetic, and he thought it neceffary to take fome notice of parts of it. He had ftated, that if there was a violent party in this country, who pretended to have in view the deftruction of the power of Minifters, and the correction of abufes, and they fhould once fucceed, they would not ftop there; that not only the Minifter would be the object of their fury, but they would aim at the deftruction of others who had any authority in the country from their talents, independant of any connection with the Government. If the Learned Gentleman did him the honour to include him under that clafs, he would tell him plainly, the caution to him was needlefs; by fuch an obfervation the Learned Gentleman only brought to his mind what, indeed, had been but feldom abfent from it for many years. "If ever," faid he, "thofe perfons who wifh to deftroy the Conftitution of this country, as was done in the French Revolution, by rapine and plunder, by carnage and defolation, fhould become a triumphant party here, though I may not be the firft, I am well convinced I fhall not be the laft object of popular fury." If ever the day fhould come, which God avert, when men's lives fhould be fubject to that fort of popular fury, Mr. Fox faid, he thought there were others who would go before him, and thofe were the authors of the prefent meafures; and from that time, in his confcience, he believed, his life would be

fhort

ſhort indeed; and therefore the Learned Gentleman need not warn him upon that ſubject. He ſaw that danger clearly; but he was not one of thoſe who looked at the danger on one ſide only. The Learned Gentleman had ſaid, if he joined bad men, he could not ſhake off his companions, nor check their exceſs; a truth which hiſtory confirmed. Was it not true on the other ſide alſo? If it be true, that if he acted with men of bad principles, the effect of ſuch a junction might be, that thoſe who had ſerved them in a particular cauſe might have no power to reſiſt their fury. Was it not, however, undeniably true, that thoſe who join a particular Miniſter, and aſſiſt him in his attempts to deſtroy the Conſtitution of the country, would feel the ſame inability to check the progreſs of his ambition? Was it not as clearly true, if he had lent his aſſiſtance to bring about that euthanaſia of the Conſtitution, that he muſt afterwards yield his life to that curſed power who had affected the deſtruction of their country? He believed the time was not very diſtant, when thoſe who had lent the Miniſter, he would call very honourable aſſiſtance, would not deny that they were become his perſonal ſlaves. He believed that ſome of them had felt it, and he thought he had ſeen ſome ſymptoms of that fact already. Certain Gentlemen ſmiled at this; he did not mean to ſay any thing that could be deemed a perſonal degradation to them, if they did not feel it for themſelves. But when he ſaw, day after day, and year after year, a ſyſtem purſued, which tended to bring this country to that euthanaſia predicted by Hume, he could not ſay he was willing to be an aſſiſtant in its accompliſhment. With regard to the miſchief, which was dreaded by the junction of men, who only wanted to reform abuſes, with thoſe who wiſhed the deſtruction, he would apply the remedy propoſed by Mr. Burke, in the caſe of our diſpute with America: that maſterly politician had ſaid on that occaſion, that he would wiſh to ſeparate the Americans; not by ſeparating the North from the South, not by ſeparating the Eaſt and Weſt, not by ſeparating Boſton from Philadelphia, but by ſeparating thoſe who were merely diſcontent with the abuſes of the Conſtitution, and thoſe who had a hatred for it, and wiſhed its total deſtruction.

The Learned Gentlemen had aſked, in what manner they ſhould enter into a negociation with theſe diſcontented perſons? He believed there would be ſome difficulty in knowing with whom to treat. As to the queſtion, how we ſhould treat? his anſwer was, by conciliation. This would be done, as Mr. Burke had ſaid, by ſeparating them. How were they to be ſeparated? By ſetting about to correct abuſes in earneſt, as much as poſſible, whether in

that

that Houſe, or in any other part of the Government. This would remove all ground of jealouſy and diſcontent on the part of thoſe who loved the Conſtitution, and who wiſhed only to ſee the abuſes eradicated; and this would deſtroy the alliance between them and thoſe who really harboured a hatred for the Conſtitution itſelf. This was the ſort of ſeparation which Mr. Burke recommended with regard to the Americans; and this was the ſeparation which he would recommend, of the diſcontented in the country at this time. Strike out the bad part of our preſent ſyſtem, add to the beautiful parts, if that be poſſible; but at all events, ſtrike out the bad ones; and then, although they ſhould not reconcile to their ſyſtem thoſe who hated the Conſtitution itſelf, they would deprive them of their force, by taking away the arguments by which they prevailed on good men to join them, and by which alone they could ever become formidable; namely, that of ſtating the abuſes of our Conſtitution as they ſubſiſted in practice at preſent. What were the arguments that theſe men made uſe of to gain to their party thoſe who loved the Conſtitution, and which had been ſaid by the Learned Gentleman to be ſo ſeducing? Topics of abuſes in the Conſtitution? Reform theſe abuſes, and they took thoſe ſeducing arguments away. It was, indeed, the whole of their argument; for as to their theory of Government, that he was ſure would not make any deep impreſſion on the body of the people, who had too much good ſenſe to be miſled by ſuch egregious fallacies.

The Learned Gentleman, in one part of his ſpeech, and only in one, ſeemed to have a reference to the Bill before the Houſe. The Learned Gentleman admitted that the Houſe was going to make a ſacrifice by the meaſure before them; but had contended that what was retained of the rights of the people was ſtill of higher value; the Hiſtory of Government was certainly better than theory; in this, therefore, he agreed with the Learned Gentleman. He did not, however, agree with him, that what they were to retain was ſuperior to what they had to loſe, if the Bill were paſſed into a law. That which was to be taken away was the foundation of the building. It might, indeed, be ſaid, that there were beautiful parts of the building ſtill left. The ſame might be ſaid of another building that was undermined: here is a beautiful Hall, there is a beautiful Saloon; there is a fine Drawing Room, here are elegant Paintings; there elegant and ſuperb Furniture, here an extenſive and well choſen Library. If the foundation were undermined, there could be nothing to reſt upon, and the whole edifice muſt ſoon fall to the ground. Such would be the caſe with our Conſtitution, if the Bill ſhould paſs into a law.

Our Government was valuable, becauſe it was free. What, he begged Gentlemen to aſk themſelves, were the fundamental parts of a free government? He knew there was a difference of opinion upon that ſubject. His own opinion was, that freedom did not depend upon the executive government, nor upon the adminiſtration of juſtice, nor upon any one particular or diſtinct part, nor even upon forms, ſo much as it did on the *general freedom of ſpeech and writing*. With regard to freedom of ſpeech, the Bill before the Houſe was a direct attack upon that freedom. No man dreaded the uſe of an univerſal propoſition more than he did himſelf; he muſt nevertheleſs ſay, that ſpeech ought to be completely free, without any reſtraint whatever, in any government pretending to be free. By being completely free, he did not mean that a perſon ſhould not be liable to puniſhment for abuſing that freedom, but he meant freedom in the firſt inſtance. The preſs was ſo at preſent, and he rejoiced it was ſo; what he meant was, any man might write and print what he pleaſed, although he was liable to be puniſhed, if he abuſed that freedom; this he called perfect freedom in the firſt inſtance. If this were neceſſary with regard to the preſs, it was ſtill more ſo with regard to ſpeech. An *imprimatur* had been talked of, and it would be dreadful enough; but a *dicatur* would be ſtill more horrible. No man had been daring enough to ſay, that the preſs ſhould not be free: but the Bill before them did not, indeed, puniſh a man for ſpeaking, it prevented him from ſpeaking. For his own part he had never heard of any danger ariſing to a free ſtate from the freedom of the preſs, or freedom of ſpeech; ſo far from it, he was perfectly clear that a free ſtate could not exiſt without both. The Learned Gentleman had ſaid, would they not preſerve the remainder by giving up this liberty? He admitted, that, by paſſing of the Bill, the people would have loſt a great deal. "A great deal!" ſaid Mr. Fox, "Aye, all that is worth preſerving. For you will have loſt the ſpirit, the fire, the freedom, the boldneſs, the energy of the Britiſh character, and with them its beſt virtue. I ſay, it is not the written law of the Conſtitution of England, it is not the law that is to be found in books, that has conſtituted the true principle of freedom in any country at any time. No! it is the energy, the boldneſs of a man's mind, which prompts him to ſpeak, not in private, but in large and popular aſſemblies, that conſtitutes, that creates, in a ſtate the ſpirit of freedom. This is the principle which gives life to liberty; without it the human character is a ſtranger to freedom.

"I have

"I have heard it ſaid of the Right Honourable Gentleman oppoſite to me, that he is now endeavouring to kick down the ladder by which he advanced to eminence. It is not him, it is England herſelf that is now kicking down the ladder by which ſhe has ariſen to wealth. I am ſorry I mentioned wealth firſt; by which, I ſay, ſhe has ariſen to wealth, to honour, to fame, to glory, and to happineſs; and is now kicking down that ladder, the freedom of ſpeech, by which ſhe has ariſen to that eminent and envied happineſs, although now becoming the deriſion and contempt of the whole globe! It was by this ladder ſhe became the envy of the reſt of the world.——

——— Sic fortis Etruria crevit.
Scilicet, et rerum facta eſt pulcherrima Roma.

How did we riſe into our eminence? By the written law? No! By the boldneſs of the Engliſh character ariſing out of the freedom of ſpeech. This is the principle which led you on to fame. If you abandon it, your fall, indeed, will not be in an inſtant, but it will not on that account be the leſs certain. The Learned Gentleman has appealed to Rome. It was the ſpirit, the energy, which I am deſcribing, which elevated Rome to what ſhe was, once the miſtreſs of the world; it was on the loſs of that ſpirit that ſhe fell; and I have no doubt but that her liberties were declining in the reign of Auguſtus, as ours are now; that ſome man of genius would ſay, Behold theſe ſuperb marbles, this elegant building, theſe beautiful forms of ſtate.—

Tum tutus bos prata perambulat.

This was flattery to Auguſtus; to that great deſtroyer of the liberties of mankind, as much an enemy to freedom, as any of the deteſtable tyrants who ſucceeded him. So with us, we are to be flattered with an account of the form of our Government, by King, Lords, and Commons——

Eadem Magiſtratuum vocabula.

There were ſome then, as there are now, who ſaid that the energy of Rome was not gone; they now ſay that we have King, Lords, and Commons; we have juries; and therefore we are ſtill free; but I ſay, take away the freedom of ſpeech, which is the principal, and your fall is certain, your death inevitable. As a tree, that is injured at the root, and the bark taken off, the branches may live for a while, ſome ſort of bloſſom may ſtill remain; but it will ſoon wither, decay, and periſh: ſo, it is true, you may ſeem to have ſome parts that appear beautiful; but, take away the freedom of ſpeech, or of writing, and the foundation of all your freedom is gone; you will then fall, and be degraded and deſpiſed by all the

world

world for your weaknefs and your folly, for not taking care of that which conducted you to all your fame, your greatnefs, your glory, and your happinefs. Before this happens, let the people once more be tried. I am a friend to taking the fenfe of the people, and therefore a friend to this motion. I wifh for every delay that is poffible in this important and alarming bufinefs. I wifh for this adjournment—

Spatium requiemque furori.

Let us put a ftop to the madnefs of this Bill; if you pafs it, you will take away the foundation of the liberty of England, and then farewel to any happinefs in this country !"

Mr. Grant explained, and the queftion was inftantly called for, on which the Houfe divided.

Ayes - - -	269
Noes - -	70
Majority	199

The queftion was then put on the Speaker's leaving the Chair and the Houfe again divided,

Ayes - -	273
Noes - -	73
Majority	201

The Houfe then refolved itfelf into a Committee on the faid Bill for preventing Seditious Meetings; the Chairman reported progrefs, and obtained leave to refume the difcuffion on Friday the 27th. Adjourned.

Lift of the Members who voted for Mr Curwen's Motion.

Anfon, Thomas, Efq. *Litchfield.*
Antonie, William, Efq. *Great Marlow.*
Aubrey, Sir John, Bt. *Clitheroe.*
Barclay, George, Efq. *Bridport.*
Bouverie, Hon. Edward, *Northampton.*
Burfh, Jof. Randyll, Efq. *Thetford.*
Byng, George, Efq. *Middlefex.*
Church, J. B. Efq. *Wendover.*
Clayton, Sir Robert, Bt. *Blechingly.*
Coke, Edward, Efq. *Derby.*
Coke, Tho. Wm. Efq. *Norfolk.*
Courtenay, John, Efq. *Tamworth.*
Crewe, John, Efq. *Chefhire.*
Curwen, J. Chriftian, Efq. *Carlifle.*
Dundas, Charles, Efq. *Berkfhire.*
Featherftonhaugh, Sir H. Bt. *Portfmouth.*
Fitzpatrick, Rt. Hon. R. *Taviftock.*
Fletcher, Sir H. Bt. *Cumberland.*
Foley, Hon. Edward, *Worcefterfhire.*
Fox, Rt. Hon. Cha. J. *Weftminfter.*
Francis, Philip, Efq. *Blechingly.*
Gafcoigne, Sir T. Bt. *Arundel.*
Grey, Charles, Efq. *Northumberland.*
Hare, James, Efq. *Knarefborough.*
Harrifon, John, Efq. *Great Grimfby.*
Howard, Henry, Efq. *Gloucefter.*
Huffey, William, Efq. *New Sarum.*
Jekyll, Jofeph, Efq. *Calne.*
Jervoife, Jervoife Clerke, Efq. *Yarmouth.*
Kemp, Thomas, Efq. *Lewes.*
Lambton, Wm Henry, Efq. *Durham,*
Lemon, Sir Wm, Bt. *Cornwall.*
Lewes, Sir Watkin, Knt. *London.*
Lufhington, William, Efq. *London.*
Macleod, General, *Invernefsfhire.*
Mainwaring, Wm, Efq. *Middlefex.*
Martin, James, Efq. *Tewkefbury.*
Milbanke, R. Efq. *Durham County.*
Milner, Sir W. Mordaunt, Bt. *York.*
North, Dudley, Efq. *Great Grimfby.*
Peirfe, Henry, Efq. *Northallerton.*
Philips, J. George, Efq. *Carmarthen.*

Plumer,

Plumer, Wm. Esq. *Hertfordshire.*
Powlett, Wm. Powlett, Esq. *Totness.*
Rawdon, Hon. John, *Appleby.*
Ridley, Sir M. W. Bt. *Newcastle upon Tyne.*
Robinson, Maurice, Esq. *Boroughbridge*
Russell, Rt Hon. Lord John, *Tavistock.*
Russell, Rt Hon. Lord Wm. *Surry.*
St. Andrew, St. John, Hon. *Bedfordshire.*
Scudamore, John, Esq. *Hereford.*
Sheridan, R. B. Esq. *Stafford.*
Smith, General, *Wareham.*
Smith, Wm. Esq. *Camelford.*
Spencer, Rt Hon. Lord Rt. *Wareham.*
Stanley, John Tho. Esq. *Wooton Basset.*
Sturt, Charles, Esq. *Bridport.*
Sykes, Sir Francis, Bt. *Wallingford.*
Sykes, Francis Wm. Esq. *Wallingford.*
Tarleton, General, *Liverpool.*
Taylor, C. Esq. *Maidstone.*
Taylor, Michael Angelo, Esq. *Poole.*
Tempest, Sir H. Vane, Bt. *Durham.*
Townshend, Rt. Hon. Lord J. *Knaresborough.*
Vyner, Robert, Esq. *Lincolnshire.*
Western, Cha. Callis, Esq. *Malden.*
Wharton, John, Esq. *Beverley.*
Whitbread, Sam. jun. Esq. *Bedford.*
Wilbraham, Roger, Esq. *Bodmaign.*
Winnington, Sir Ed. Bt. *Droitwich.*
Wyndham, Hon. Percy C. *Midhurst.*
Wynne, R. Watkin, Esq. *Denbighshire.*

POPULAR MEETINGS.

Crown and Anchor, Strand, Nov 25, 1795.

ST. CLEMENT DANES, AND ST. MARY-LE-STRAND.

AT a very numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of these Parishes, convened by Public Advertisement, for taking into consideration the two Bills now before Parliament,

FRANCIS PLOWDEN, Esq. in the Chair,

The following Resolutions were severally put, and unanimously agreed to.

That this Meeting do fully and cordially approve of the Petition to the House of Commons against the two Bills now pending in Parliament, moved by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and agreed to almost unanimously at a General Meeting of the Inhabitants of Westminster, in Palace-yard, on Monday the 16th instant: they moreover look upon the principles and tendency of these two Bills as fundamentally unconstitutional, inasmuch as they call upon us to surrender those Rights which are in their nature inalienable even from ourselves, and which we cannot renounce for our posterity.

RESOLVED,

That this Meeting do condemn the conduct of the fifteen persons who lately held a clandestine Meeting, in St. Clement's Vestry-room; and that the sentiments of that Meeting held forth as the sense of the Parish at large is a gross attempt to impose on the public mind.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, for his truly Patriotic and firm exertion, in the present momentous crisis, to ward off the death-blow aimed at our Civil Rights and Liberties.

That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman, and inserted in the public Papers.

FRANCIS PLOWDEN, Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair, the following Resolution was proposed, and unanimously agreed to:

That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Chairman for his upright and impartial conduct in the Chair.

ST. JAMES's

ST. JAMES'S, WESTMINSTER, *Nov.* 24, 1795.

AT a very numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Parish, held this Day, in Willis's Rooms, in King-street,

GEORGE BYNG, Esq. M. P. in the Chair,

The following Resolutions were agreed to:

Resolved, I. That this Meeting adopts with the most hearty approbation, the Petition moved by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and passed at the Meeting of the Inhabitants of Westminster, held in Palace-yard, on Monday the 16th instant.

II. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. C. J. Fox, for the active resolute, and constitutional opposition which he has given to the dangerous principles of two Bills now pending in Parliament: the first intituled, An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts: the second intituled, An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies; by which Bills, as we conceive, the undoubted Right of the People to deliver their opinions on Public Affairs, and to Petition parliament for Redress of Grievances, is manifestly invaded and meant to be taken away.

In the name and by order of the Meeting,

(Signed) G. BYNG, Chairman.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ABOVE MEETING.

TUESDAY the Inhabitants of the parish of ST. JAMES's met at Willis's Rooms, King's Street, to consider of a Petition to the House of Commons against the two alarming Bills pending in that House.

MR. BYNG was unanimously called to the Chair, and having opened the business of the day,

MR. FRANCIS, in a most argumentative speech, dwelt on the pernicious and degrading effects those Bills would have on the liberties of Englishmen, if passed into a Law.

MR. DEVAYNES attempted to speak in favour of the Bills, but such were the marks of disapprobation, that we could only hear him say, that if those Bills should not be found necessary, they would not be passed.

MR. BYNG then read the Petition agreed to at the Meeting at Hackney, on Saturday last, and proposed that it should be adopted by the present Meeting, which was agreed to with three dissentients only.

The Thanks of the Meeting were then unanimously voted to Mr. Fox for his general conduct in Parliament, and his strenuous opposition to the obnoxious Bills.

MR. FOX then addressed the Meeting in nearly the following words:

"GENTLEMEN,

"Your cordial approbation of my public conduct animates and fills me with gratitude. I am always proud of your approbation, but I never was so proud of it as on the present occasion, because it is the most momentous crisis in your lives and mine. Your hearty concurrence in the Petition which has just been read fills me with the highest satisfaction, and for this reason in addition to every other. It was stated by the supporters of those

obnoxious Bills, that the ſenſe of the Electors of Weſtminſter could not be fairly collected at a *public* Meeting, ſuch as that held in Palace-yard; they preferred parochial Meetings; they were indulged in that wiſh, and I hope they are now ſatisfied. Gentlemen, if the Miniſtry ſhould be bold enough to preſs theſe deteſtable Bills through the Houſe, and if they ſhould paſs into a law, I hope that if any legal and conſtitutional means are left, you will not ceaſe to employ them till they are repealed; but I cannot ſee that any thing will then be left for Engliſhmen to boaſt of; this nation will then be reduced to the ſame ſtate with other monarchies in Europe, where the Monarch is every thing, and the people nothing. Some of the forms of the Conſtitution may remain, but the ſpirit and the ſubſtance will be no more; and I have no difficulty in ſaying, that if they paſs, neither you nor I can be of any ſervice to the public."

This ſpeech was received with great applauſe.

The number preſent amounted to upwards of fifteen hundred.

ST. PAUL's, COVENT-GARDEN, AND ST. MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND, *Nov.* 26.

AT a Meeting of ſeveral Inhabitants of theſe Pariſhes,

MR. CHARLES HARRIS in the Chair,

It was Reſolved, That it is expedient to convene a General Meeting of the Inhabitants, for the purpoſe of taking into conſideration the two Bills now depending in Parliament, affecting the Liberties of the People of England.

Reſolved, That ſuch Meeting be held at the Shakeſpeare Tavern, Covent-Garden, on Saturday next, at Twelve o'clock.

PORTSTOKEN WARD, *Nov.* 26.

AT a Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Ward, convened by Sir Benjamin Hammet, Alderman of the ſaid Ward, at Aldgate Church, to take into conſideration two Bills now pending in Parliament for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and for Preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies,

SIR BENJAMIN HAMMET, Knt. in the Chair,

Reſolved, That we feel the deepeſt concern at the late attempt made on the Perſon of his Majeſty, and are anxious that the perpetrators of ſo atrocious an outrage ſhould be ſpeedily diſcovered, and puniſhed by the PRESENT EXISTING LAWS.

That this Meeting declare their firm attachment to the principles of the Conſtitution, as eſtabliſhed at the Glorious Revolution.

That the Bills now pending in Parliament will, if paſſed into Laws, be deſtructive of the principles of the Conſtitution, and a direct violation of the Bill of Rights.

That we do not think the Bills neceſſary, as we are perſuaded that the exiſting Laws are, if properly executed, fully competent to the purpoſes of preſerving the Sovereign, and the public tranquillity.

That we conſider it as the moſt ſacred duty, as a duty which we owe to the memory of our anceſtors, to ourſelves, and to our poſterity, to do all that we peaceably and conſtitutionally may, to prevent thoſe obnoxious Bills from being paſſed into Laws.

That

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Rea and Mr. Atkinſon, the Churchwardens, for their readineſs in granting the uſe of the church for this Meeting.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Deputy Bunn and Mr. Atkinſon, for their ſpirited and impartial conduct as Common Councilmen of this Ward.

That theſe Reſolutions be ſigned by the Chairman, and that they be publiſhed in the London Newſpapers.

BEN. HAMMET.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Benjamin Hammet, Knt. for his readineſs in calling this Meeting, and for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

ALDERSGATE WARD, *Nov.* 26, 1795.

AT a numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Ward, aſſembled at Trinity Hall, Alderſgate-ſtreet, in purſuance of public notice,

MR. DEPUTY ALDRIDGE in the Chair,

I. Reſolved, That this Meeting do expreſs their firm attachment to the principles of the Conſtitution as eſtabliſhed at the Revolution; and that the late daring outrage, committed on the perſon of his moſt ſacred Majeſty, is viewed by them with the greateſt abhorrence.—Carried unanimouſly.

II. Reſolved, That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that it is expedient to preſent a Petition to the Houſe of Commons, praying that they would not paſs into Laws two Bills now depending in their Honourable Houſe, entitled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," and "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts."—Carried by a majority, only five diſſenting hands.

III. Reſolved, That the Petition now produced and read be the Petition to be preſented; and that the ſame, after being ſigned by the Perſons preſent, do lie at the Alderſgate-ſtreet Coffee-houſe during this day, and till Three o'clock to-morrow, for the ſignatures of ſuch other inhabitants of this Ward as ſhall approve the ſame.—Carried unanimouſly.

IV. Reſolved, That W. Smith, Eſq. M. P. be requeſted to preſent the ſaid Petition.—Carried unanimouſly.

V. Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Deputy Aldridge, and Mr. R. A. Cox, for their manly oppoſition to the Bills in the Court of Common Council, at the time when ſo many of them were voting in direct oppoſition to the voice of their Conſtituents.—Carried unanimouſly.

VI. Reſolved Unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman, for his able and impartial conduct in the Chair.

VII. Reſolved, That theſe Reſolutions be ſigned by the Chairman, and publiſhed in the Daily Papers.

DEPUTY ALDRIDGE, Chairman.

TENOR OF THE PETITION.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE WARD OF ALDERSGATE,

Sheweth,

That your Petitioners feel the deepeſt abhorrence of the late abominable outrage upon his Majeſty's Perſon, and truſt that the perpetrators thereof

will receive the punishment due to so flagitious an offence, to which the existing laws are, in their opinion, fully adequate. That your Petitioners feel the deepest concern that such an attack upon the sacred Person of his Majesty should be made a pretext for the introduction of two Bills now before your Honourable House, which, under a pretence of providing for the greater safety of his Majesty, would, if passed into a law, affect, and tend ultimately to annihilate the liberties of the people. That it is the opinion of your Petitioners, that the power proposed to be committed to the Magistrates by one of these Bills would be a direct violation of the Constitution, and that the people would have no security against the abuse of it: and their apprehension that such power would be abused is warranted by the conduct of John William Anderson, Esq. Alderman of this Ward, who refused to convene the inhabitants to consider the propriety of the present Petition, although requested so to do by upwards of thirty of your Petitioners. That our abhorrence of these Bills is the greater, and our opposition thereto the more earnest, from an apprehension, general throughout the kingdom, that they are intended as a foundation whereon to erect yet greater violations of the just and acknowledged Rights and Liberties of the People, recognized and confirmed at the memorable æra of the Revolution in 1688.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly, but earnestly pray, that your Honourable House will not pass the said Bills, intituled—" An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies"—and " An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts."

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, NOV. 26.

Lord Hood presented a Petition from some of the Inhabitants of St. Clement Danes, and another from some of the Inhabitants of the City and Liberties of Westminster, for Parliament to adopt measures to prevent Seditious Meetings.

Mr. Samuel Smith presented a Petition to the same effect from some of the Inhabitants of Leicester.

Mr. Grey presented a Petition from some of the Inhabitants of the Borough of Newport, in Cornwall, and another from the persons who subscribed it, residing in the Borough of Launceston and Cornwall, against the Convention Bills.

FRIDAY, NOV. 27.

Mr. Honeywood presented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Hythe, against the Convention Bills. He observed that the Meeting had been regularly convened by the Mayor, though he declined the Presidency of it, and the Chair was therefore filled by another very respectable Gentleman. The persons who had subscribed the Petition were in every extent distinguished for their loyalty to the King, and their love of the Constitution, and one name he recom-

mended

mended particularly to the notice of the Houſe. It was that of a Noble Peer of Ireland, Lord Rokeby, formerly a Member of that Houſe *(then known by the name of Mr. Matthew Montague)*, a perſon who had retired from public life, being in the eighty-fourth year of his age, but ſtill actively employed in his attention to the morals of his country, and to acts of private benevolence and public charity. He was known alſo as the author of a pamphlet towards the end of the American war, which, with the ſpirit of prophecy, predicted what did actually happen. Having ſaid thus much upon the Petition he had now the honour to preſent, he begged leave to advert to what had paſſed upon a former evening, by reading a letter from the Mayor of Rocheſter, which he had received this morning, and he was glad to ſee his Hon. Colleague in his place, as he was the perſon who had cauſed it.

Mr. Baker called to Order.

Mr. Honeywood ſaid, he ſhould not have preſumed to revert to any Petition which had been laid upon the table, but for the reflection thrown upon the character of a worthy Magiſtrate, whom he thought it his duty to exculpate. He did not ſuppoſe the odium to have been wilfully faſtened on him, for it was ſuch as all men are liable to, but when it was not deſerved it ought to be removed.

The Speaker ſaid, according to the rules of the Houſe, when a Member is called to Order, he muſt obey it; but he imagined that the Hon. Gentleman appealed to the candour and indulgence of the Houſe, which frequently was granted.

Mr. Honeywood ſaid, he did appeal to the candour and indulgence of the Houſe, and then read the letter, which reminded him that he knew the Mayor was waiting in a back room of the Inn at the time of the proceſſion to ſpeak to Mr. Honeywood, who was then engaged in converſation with another Gentleman. This Mr. Honeywood confirmed, and added, that upon hearing the ſhout in the ſtreets, the Mayor requeſted Mr. Wright, a Gentleman who accompanied him with the Petition, to ſee what was the matter. Mr. Wright went out in conſequence, but the noiſe had ceaſed, the people had diſperſed and gone to their own homes, and no crowd nor tumult was to be found.

Sir Edward Knatchbull ſaid, if the Mayor had previous knowledge of the proceſſion, he ſhould have prevented it.

Mr. Maurice Robinson, in a ſhort ſpeech, thanked Mr. Honeywood for the handſome terms in which he had mentioned his venerable relation (Lord Rokeby), and expreſſed his approbation of the Petition.

Mr. Fox prefented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Lyme Regis, in Dorfetfhire, againft the Convention Bills, and praying for Peace. He then prefented a Petition againft the Bills, (adverting at the fame time to one from the fame Town on a different fide of the queftion) from 1,200 of the Inhabitants of the Town of Leicefter, whofe names were fubfcribed in two days, and if the urgency of the occafion would have allowed two days more, there would have been twelve times that number.

Mr. Amyatt prefented a Petition from Southampton, for fuch meafures to prevent Sedition as Parliament fhall think meet. This called forth a fhort converfation between Mr. Rofe, junior, and Mr. Sheridan, who obferved, that notwithftanding this and fimilar Petitions were prefented as Counter-Petitions to thofe againft the Bills, there was not one iota for the Bills themfelves.

Mr. Sheridan next prefented a Petition from his own Conftituents, the Inhabitants of Stafford, againft the Bills. He had a general recollection of their names, and from the fignatures he was fure that the Petition contained the general fenfe of the Inhabitants. He alfo prefented a Petition from the Town of Newark againft the Bills.

Mr. Sheridan next prefented a Petition againft the Bills from the Gentlemen and Burgeffes of Newcaftle under Lyne, where the Mayor was not adverfe to the Petition, nor was there one perfon in the Town diffenting from it. As the Petition therefore paffed unanimoufly, and both the Reprefentatives of the Town were adverfe to it, Mr. Sheridan faid, the Inhabitants had done him the honour to commit it to his care.

Mr. Sheridan next prefented a Petition againft the Bills from a number of Mechanics who had not an opportunity of figning that Petition from the Affociated Tradefmen. To thofe 15,000 names, therefore, might be added the 852 affixed to this Petition. It came from the Journeymen Gun-Makers, which of courfe, he faid, the Gentlemen on the oppofite fide would deem *very alarming!*

Mr. Fox prefented a Petition againft the Bills of a very uncommon defcription, for it was only figned by *one* perfon; but that perfon was a gentleman of genius and talent, of irreproachable manners in private life, and of the greateft integrity in his public character. It came from Major Cartwright; it was very long, but, Mr. Fox faid, he had perufed it with care, and found nothing exceptionable in it.

Mr. Fox then begged leave to prefent another Petition againft the Bills, upon which he would fay a few words. The Petition was that of his Conftituents, the Inhabitants of the City and Liberties

of

of Weſtminſter, and was ſubſcribed by Ten Thouſand One Hundred and Twenty-five perſons, a number nearly equal to the number of Voters in that City. How this Petition was obtained was well known, for it had been introduced into the diſcuſſion of the Houſe. It had been recommended in a large public Meeting, and was ſigned voluntarily. His Noble Colleague (Lord Hood), whom he was happy to ſee attending in his place, in caſe it were poſſible he ſhould have any objection, had adviſed to have the Petition carried from houſe to houſe. Mr. Fox did not ſay it was blameable to take the ſenſe of the people in that manner, but he did not think that way ſo free, ſo candid, and ſo fair, as when the people, uninfluenced and unbiaſſed, act purely from their own impulſe. The perſons who ſigned this Petition had been actuated by a voluntary, general, aud univerſal motive. They came ſpontaneouſly, generally, and univerſally forth to expreſs their abhorrence of the Bills againſt which they now remonſtrated, and to expreſs their juſt apprehenſion of the evils likely to enſue. It was true, that in conſequence of the Proteſt of his Noble Colleague, a few Parochial Meetings had been held, and the Veſtries had ſent about Petitions from houſe to houſe. Mr. Fox ſaid he was preſent at three of the Parochial Meetings, and there was one which he did not attend. It was that of St. Martin in the Fields, where Mr. Drummond was in the Chair, and where, contrary to the intentions of thoſe perſons by whom the Meeting was called, a certain number of reſolutions were almoſt unanimouſly paſſed, the reſult of which was a flat mark of contradiction to the aſſertions of thoſe perſons who had adviſed this meaſure. The other Parochial Meetings were in St. Clement Danes, St. James's, and St. Anne's. In St. Anne's the Pariſhioners firſt met in a ſmall number, when, as it was ſuppoſed, ſufficient notice had not been given, a ſecond Meeting was called, which decided againſt the Bills. In St. James's Pariſh, there was a larger aſſembly of Pariſhioners than had ever been remembered upon any former occaſion. Some reſolutions had been previouſly drawn up, and handed about from houſe to houſe with very little ſucceſs, when this Meeting, at which Mr. Devaynes was Chairman, decided by a majority of *one thouſand to twenty-ſeven voices.*

If any doubts ſhould be entertained concerning this Petition, as not expreſſive of the general ſenſe of the People of Weſtminſter, there may ſtill be opportunities, ſaid Mr. Fox, to determine. "I have ſaid ſo much (continued he) upon this Petition in particular, becauſe it is not poſſible for me to collect the opinions of all the inhabitants of every county in the kingdom; but as Weſtminſter is

the place in which I live, where you live, Sir, and where this House lives, I may venture to aſſert, that this Petition does contain the general ſenſe of the Inhabitants of Weſtminſter." He ſaid, he had frequently occaſion to attend Public Meetings, he was in the conſtant practice of inquiring into the opinions of his Conſtituents, and he had often the honour of preſenting Petitions to that Houſe, and to his Majeſty, but he had never before found the People ſo unanimous. He preſented a Petition to his Majeſty againſt the American War, which was ſubſcribed by an aſtoniſhing number of ſignatures; but this was far more univerſal and lively. The Houſe need not depend upon his teſtimony; for they had all an opportunity to examine and enquire, though he believed they would find that the people who had ſigned it were more in unanimity and number than had been known in Weſtminſter upon a former occaſion, of any kind whatever.

Sir John Frederick preſented a Petition from the Clergy and Freeholders of the County of Surry, ſubſcribed by 2000 names. The prayer of the Petition ſtated a deſire that effectual means ſhould be taken by Parliament to prevent Seditious Meetings, without infringing the right of Petitioning, which being read,

Mr. Sheridan obſerved that the Petition was a ſtrong cenſure upon the Bills. Although the Petitioners ſtated, that they underſtood ſome Acts were at preſent under the conſideration of Parliament, the purport of which they evidently knew, as appeared by the ſubſequent part of the Petition, they requeſted a remedy for the evils they complained of, without deſtroying the liberties of the people, or trenching upon the right of Parliament, and the free exerciſe of Speech.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer denied that the Petition contained, or was meant to convey, any diſapprobation of the Bills; on the contrary, it called upon the Houſe to enact ſuch laws as might maintain the due exerciſe of the right of Petition.

Mr. Fox noticed the Chancellor of the Exchequer's expreſſion *due exerciſe* of the right of Petition, and contended, that the Bill went to alter, nay do away, that right; for when it reſtrained free diſcuſſion, and placed a *dictator* where at preſent free and uncontrouled diſcuſſion could be held, he contended, that the right was not ſimply altered, but done away. That the Bills, he aſſerted, did trench on the form and manner of aſſembling, debating, and petitioning, and went to reſtrain opinion, had not yet been denied by thoſe who ſupported the meaſures; he therefore inſiſted that the

4 Petition

Petition did abſolutely convey a cenſure on the Bills, whatever the intentions or opinions of thoſe who ſigned it might have been.

A converſation took place upon the proceedings of a former Surry Meeting and Petition, which, Sir John Frederick ſaid, did not conſiſt of the electors and ſentiments of the county. The contrary was maintained by Mr. Fox, who ſaid, that the laſt Meeting had been called by an advertiſement, which betrayed the deſign of thoſe who called it, and proved, that they meant only to convene thoſe who were known to be decidedly in favour of the Bills. It was addreſſed to the holders of landed and funded property, a circumſtance that at once ſhewed its meaning and its object. He ſaid, that open and public Meetings have this ſupreme advantage, that the principles of meaſures are open to every ſort of diſcuſſion, and information is to be had by all parties. Where Petitions are carried from houſe to houſe, ſuch is not the caſe; and ſuch was the character of the Petition then preſented.

Mr. Crespigny preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Caſtle Baynard Ward, againſt the Bills.

A Petition from 1000 of the Inhabitants of Bath alſo was preſented to the ſame effect, among the ſignatures of which was that of John Diſney, who ſtated, that he had been groſsly impoſed on, by being induced to ſign his name to a former Petition under falſe pretences.

Mr. Rose, jun. preſented a Counter-petition from the Inhabitants of Portſea and Portſmouth, ſigned by 1974 perſons, praying that Convention Bills may be ſpeedily paſſed.

Mr. W. Smith preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Alderſgate Ward againſt the Bills. Upon this, without any perſonal prejudice, he complained of the conduct of an Alderman, (Anderſon) who reſided in that Ward, and refuſed to convene a Meeting of the Inhabitants, to conſider on the Bills in queſtion. The Alderman muſt have been unaware, he ſaid, that by ſo doing, inſtead of ſupporting the Bills, he furniſhed the ſtrongeſt argument againſt them. He then adverted to what Mr. Fox had formerly obſerved, upon the probability that Sheriffs might refuſe to convene the people upon requiſition, if theſe Bills ſhould paſs, and mentioned an inſtance already in the High Sheriff for the county of York, who, though required to call a Meeting by 53 very reſpectable perſons in that county, had refuſed to do ſo. The Petition which he preſented, he obſerved, was, notwithſtanding the conduct of the Alderman, ſigned by 200 of the houſeholders, ſince laſt night, without ſolicitation, and they had not only given their names, but their places of abode.

Mr.

Mr. Alderman Anderson juſtified himſelf, by ſaying that he had lived long in the Ward, and had an opportunity of knowing moſt of the inhabitants, but out of the thirty-one who ſigned the requiſition, he did not know more than four or five. As the purport of the Bills alſo had been amply diſcuſſed before by the Repreſentatives of the Ward in the Common Council, he thought it unneceſſary to conſult the inhabitants, and told the perſons ſo who waited on him for that purpoſe; and they replied, that they were more anxious to do it, becauſe Mr. Pitt had been Miniſter for a great many years, and they thought it was now high time for Mr. Fox to be ſo. (*A loud laugh*).

Mr. Sheridan could not ſuffer ſuch levity to gloſs over the conduct of the Honourable Gentleman, who, however long his reſidence might have been in the Ward, or however univerſal his acquaintance with the inhabitants of it, was compelled by duty, on receiving a requiſition of that nature, to enquire who the perſons were who ſigned it, and not to refuſe their requeſt, becauſe he had no perſonal acquaintance with them. The Honourable Gentleman had refuſed it alſo, becauſe the Repreſentatives of the Ward in Common Council had already diſcuſſed the tendency of the Bills, and delivered their opinions on them. But what kind of reaſoning was this, and how would it apply to that Houſe, when, becauſe the Repreſentatives of the People there may have happened to have paſſed a law, we ſuppoſe, for argument's ſake, directly oppoſite to the intereſts, happineſs, and proſperity of the kingdom, the People are no longer to have an opinion about it? He ſubſcribed to the declaration of his Honourable Friend (Mr. Smith), that ſuch proceedings were the ſtrongeſt arguments that could be uſed againſt the Bills, and quoted the inſtance, not only of the High Sheriff of York, but of Northumberland alſo; aſked whether, after the Bills have paſſed, they or the Honourable Gentleman would think it their duty to attend that public Meeting which they had refuſed to call? He fairly quoted theſe as inſtances of the abuſes which were likely to enſue the paſſing of the Bills; and obſerved, that it was remarkable, when one Magiſtrate (Mr. Le Meſurier) ſtated a Common Hall to be an improper mode of obtaining the ſenſe of the people, and that there could be no appeal but to the deciſion of the ſeveral Wards, that now the requiſition for making that appeal ſhould not be allowed. But as the Public Meeting at Weſtminſter, ſo did the Common Hall of London, expreſs the general ſenſe of the people, and it was not only confirmed by that Petition, ſigned by 200 Inhabitants of one Ward, and the Petition he had preſented, ſigned by 1700 of the Inhabitants of the Ward of

Farring-

Farringdon Without, but he trusted it would be confirmed by every other Ward in the ratio of five to one.

MR. ANDERSON explained, that he did not say the Meeting would be superfluous and impertinent, but unnecessary.

MR. WILBERFORCE disapproved of the conduct of the High Sheriff of York, because it prevented a full, fair, and free discussion, and because it prevented the majority of the Inhabitants, as he surmised, from giving their approbation to the Bills. If the Bills had passed, however, the Meeting might have been held, because it entrusted three Magistrates, in case the Sheriff should refuse, with that power; and among the 53 names of the persons who had signed the requisition, he believed that instead of three there were thirty Magistrates.—He then gave a proof of the misrepresentation which had been circulated through the kingdom, by stating that one of the York Papers not only had given an account of the Westminster Meeting which had passed, but of the Surry and Bedford Meetings which had not passed, and of the likelihood of a Petition against the Bills from the Merchants, Bankers, and Traders of London, which he attributed to the advertisement for that Meeting in which no Banker was concerned.

MR. FOX was surprised at the boldness of Gentlemen on the opposite side, who because his Honourable Friend (Mr. Erskine) had said, that he did not know whether any Banker had signed that Petition, believed that no Banker had signed it, and thus converted a supposition into a fact, although his Honourable Friend (Mr. W. Smith) had given them reason to think otherwise. The advertisement merely gave notice that a Meeting of the Merchants, Bankers, and Traders, was to be held, who were thereby invited to it, and if the Bankers did not choose to attend, they were at perfect liberty to do so. It was so easy to assume a fact, without enquiry, he said, that he was astonished any person in that House should do it.

A long conversation ensued upon this; Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Rolle, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Thornton, Mr. W. Smith, Alderman Newnham, Mr. R. Thornton, Mr. Isaac Hawkins Browne, and Mr. Morris Robinson, were the Speakers.

MR. WILBERFORCE did not assert the contrary on his own knowledge, but on the authority of a Member who had asserted it in his place.

MR. ALDERMAN NEWNHAM disclaimed having said that no Banker signed the Petition, but he was assured by a friend who attended the Meeting, that having asked if any Banker was present, they were not able to point out to him any one of this description.

ſcription. He wiſhed ſome Gentleman would name a Banker that was preſent.

Mr. W. Smith, on looking over the liſt of Bankers, and the names to the Petition, ſaw thoſe of Dimſdale and John White, who certainly were Bankers.

Mr. H. Thornton ſaid, he learned from converſation, that there was the name of one Banker ſigned to the Petition.

Sir William Milner read the letter of the High Sheriff of York, in anſwer to the requiſition, and commented on the impropriety of his conduct in quitting the county during his ſhrievalty, without leaving information where he might be found, for the poſtſcript ſtated that ſuch was his intention, and he had not fixed on the place where he ſhould abide.

Mr. Sheridan preſented a Petition from 1200 of the Inhabitants of Clerkenwell, which was ſigned in twelve hours againſt the Bills, and if there had been more time there would have been more numbers, but they acted under the ſame impreſſion with many other people, that if the Petition was not immediately preſented it could not be received at all.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the reading of the Order of the Day, for the Houſe to reſolve itſelf into a Committee upon the Bill for preventing Seditious Meetings.

Mr. Fox merely roſe to aſk when it was probable that the Report and the third reading of the Bill would come on. Of courſe he ſuppoſed when the Bill had gone through the Committee, that it would be reported, and then ordered to be printed.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, that as uſual, immediately after the Bill had gone through the Committee, he ſhould move for it to be printed, and that the further conſideration would come forward on Tueſday next, and the third reading, he ſuppoſed, upon the Thurſday following.

Mr. Fox, Mr. Grey, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Whitbread, junior, General Tarleton, General Macleod, &c. &c. &c. immediately roſe, and left the Houſe.

The Houſe having reſolved itſelf into a Committee on the Bill for preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies, Mr. Sergeant, in the Chair, the Committee proceeded on the clauſes of the Bill, the date of its commencement being agreed to be filled up hereafter.

The number of perſons that are ſtated to be the object of the Bill muſt exceed fifty, as the blank is now filled up, and the number of Juſtices of the Peace is two.

That

That part of the clauſe being gone through, which relates to Meetings holden for the purpoſe or under the pretext of conſidering of alterations in matters eſtabliſhed in Church and State,

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, he did not attend for the purpoſe of propoſing any alteration in the preſent Bill, being perſuaded that no alteration, except that of negativing every clauſe in it, would be of ſervice, or palatable to the great majority of the public at large. He attended chiefly to watch ſome things which were going forward. This Bill was ſaid to be a Bill to prevent Seditious Meetings and Tumultuous Aſſemblies, and he was now convinced more than ever, that this Bill would not anſwer that purpoſe. It would not prevent the diſcuſſion of the queſtion of Peace or War; the conduct or capacity of the Miniſters to carry on the War; or give to the Miniſters the ſecurity which they wanted by this Bill, and which indeed was the foundation for it (although for the purpoſe of deluding the public, they had thought fit to give it another title); it was to give a ſecurity to Miniſters againſt any public deliberation of the people on the miſconduct of Miniſters. For by this Bill four hundred thouſand, or any other number of perſons, might aſſemble at Copenhagen-houſe, or in any open field, and there they might canvaſs the queſtion of War or Peace; the whole conduct of the King's Miniſters in all reſpects whatever; and hold what language they pleaſed, whether temperate, or intemperate; to recommend Peace, or even to withhold Supplies; and under the authority of this Bill, no Juſtice of the Peace would have any power to interfere with their proceedings, or even to approach them with any authority to diſperſe, prevent, or even to interrupt their proceedings. Gentlemen might wonder how this ſhould be the caſe, when the very object of the Bill was to prevent ſuch tumultuous aſſemblies. He would tell them: by this Bill any number of perſons might meet for the purpoſe of examining and conſidering any depending law; this they could not avoid in the Bill, according to the principle on which its authors pretended to proceed. Now, every Supply Bill that was offered to that Houſe—and there could hardly be a week during the ſitting of Parliament without one—was a depending law, and therefore, according to the proviſions of this Act, the people, to any number, and without any reſtraint, might meet and diſcuſs it, and under the diſcuſſion of a Bill for granting a Supply to his Majeſty, they might, and they ought, to diſcuſs the whole conduct of the King's Miniſters; they might, and they ought, to conſider whether they ought not to be removed out of his Majeſty's ſervice. It was a Bill therefore rather to encourage

courage and provoke, than to ſuppreſs tumultuous aſſemblies. He did not mention this to call on Miniſters to inſert a clauſe to prevent perſons meeting to diſcuſs a depending law; on the contrary, if ſuch a clauſe was offered, he ſhould oppoſe it, as he had oppoſed the whole principle of this Bill; he mentioned it to ſhew the abſurd inefficacy of the whole of this meaſure, and alſo by way of notice of what ground he ſhould hereafter take when this Bill came out of the Committee, in order that there ſhould be no colour for ſaying hereafter that he took an unmanly part in the way he ſhould oppoſe the Bill in its future ſtages.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer obſerved, that Gentlemen moſt uſually attended Committees on Bills in that Houſe with a view of amending them, but the Honourable Gentleman ſaid he attended for a different purpoſe, and he ſhould conſider what the Honourable Gentleman ſaid rather in the nature of a notice, by way of anticipating his future objections, than any thing in the nature of debating upon them now.—However, he ſhould obſerve on ſome points of the Honourable Gentleman's aſſertions: he ſaid, that any number of perſons might meet, as he deſcribed, for the purpoſe of diſcuſſing any Supply Bill, and then argue on the whole policy of the country. He hoped that the proviſions of the Bill would not be liable to the abuſe which the Honourable Gentleman anticipated; he hoped alſo, that he never would lend the aid of his abilities to ſuch an evaſion of the principle of this meaſure, and thereby promote tumult and ſedition. He did not conceive the danger to which the Honourable Gentleman alluded: if any number of perſons met under a nominal pretext, and then diſcuſſed other topics that were foreign to it, he conceived that they would come under the proviſions of this Bill. However, at all events, they would, in the caſe alluded to, only meet during the Meeting of Parliament, and if it ſhould be found that the inexhauſtible ingenuity of Seditious Aſſemblies required to be met again, by further proviſions from Parliament, he hoped that Parliament would do its duty, but he had rather leave that caſe to its own courſe, than to anticipate any proviſion againſt it.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, he was glad the Right Honourable Gentleman had taken what he ſaid as a notice of what he ſhould do hereafter upon this Bill; he need not wonder he was now a little ſneered at by that Right Honourable Gentleman, about lending the aid of his abilities to any meaſure, for he had been more than once reproached for having given himſelf ſo much trouble to mend ſo many of his bad Bills. He ſeemed to forget the nature of the

caſe

caſe now before Parliament. Suppoſe Mr. Thelwall, or any other perſon, was to call a Meeting at Copenhagen-houſe, when a Bill of Supply was to be voted in Parliament, and and that inſtead of three there ſhould be ten tribunes erected, from whence to harange the populace, could any thing be more regular in the diſcuſſion of a Supply Bill, than to enter into the circumſtances of the war, the diſtreſſed ſituation of the country, and the miſconduct of Miniſters in the courſe of it; it was the conſtant courſe of debating in Parliament. There was no ingenuity required upon the ſubject; the company ſo aſſembled would ſoon find out the incapacity and the tyrannical diſpoſition of Miniſters, and without any ingenuity, they would ſoon find out, and expreſs, that the calamities of this country were brought on by the profligacy of Miniſters. He ſaid that advantage would be taken of this Bill, and the very thing which Miniſters affected to prevent. The people would avail themſelves of it, becauſe they were provoked to it by the tyrannical and abſurd reſtrictions impoſed upon them by the preſent Bill. He ſhould ſtate this more at large hereafter. Whether Miniſters would hereafter bring in another Bill upon this ſubject he knew not, but he was ſure this was inadequate to the object for which it was profeſſed to be brought forward.

Sir William Young ſaid a few words to ſhew his diſagreement with Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Serjeant Adair thought that Mr. Sheridan was very little intitled to the thanks of the Committee for ſuggeſting the propriety of a clauſe, which, if brought forward, he ſaid he ſhould oppoſe. He believed it was not the intention of Parliament, and he hoped it never would be, to propoſe a law to prevent any number of perſons from meeting to diſcuſs the nature of a depending law, and under ſuch diſcuſſion to include the character of his Majeſty's Miniſters, be they who they may. It was to be underſtood, however, that perſons ſo aſſembled ſhould demean themſelves peaceably and orderly.

Mr. Sheridan begged to ſet the learned Serjeant right. He ſhould firſt, however, take notice of the appellation of the learned Gentleman, which had been beſtowed upon him through the whole of the learned Serjeant's ſpeech. The learned Gentleman had called him learned at the time he was accuſing him of abſurdity; whether he called him learned Gentlemen becauſe he had been abſurd, he could not tell.

When he made the obſervation relative to the want of further

reſtrictions on ſuch meetings as he had alluded to, he made it from a motive of candour; if he had made it upon the third reading of the Bill, it might have been urged, that he was very uncandid in not having mentioned it in the Committee. The learned Serjeant had ſaid, God forbid that the free diſcuſſion of the meaſures of Miniſters ſhould be prevented, if ſuch diſcuſſion were carried on regularly, and according to the proviſions of the Bill. What he had contended was, that to meetings for the purpoſe of conſidering Bills pending in Parliament, the proviſions of the Bill did not apply.

The ſecond clauſe limits the number to fifty. On the third clauſe, which enacts, that if fifty perſons or more meet, and after an order of proclamation to diſperſe, twelve ſhall remain one hour, it was propoſed, by the Solicitor General, to make it death without benefit of clergy; an amendment was moved, that ſuch continuance ſhould only be puniſhed as a miſdemeanour.

Mr. Wilberforce was for the more lenient, as he ſaid, he thought the puniſhment diſproportioned to the offence; from the immediate neceſſity of the caſe in a riot, the power of diſperſing by force was juſtifiable; by law, a man might kill another who attacked him; but having ſecured him, he would be guilty of felony without benefit of clergy, if he afterwards killed him in cold blood. He conjured the Houſe not to adopt a clauſe which, if carried into execution, he was perſuaded all would repent.

Mr. Stanley declared his opinion, that it ſhould be only a miſdemeanour.

Mr. Banks agreed with Mr. Stanley in thinking the puniſhment of felony was too ſevere for the offence.

Sir Peter Burrell contended, that if the crime was made leſs than felony without benefit of clergy, it would be inconſiſtent with the empowering the magiſtrates to diſperſe by force; for if, in doing ſo, men were killed, it would only be a ſummary way of inflicting the puniſhment of death, to which the law would otherwiſe condemn them; if, on the contrary, it was declared only to be a miſdemeanor, the killing in the act of diſperſing by force, would be exceeding the puniſhment the law would inflict by a ſummary mode of proceeding.

Sir W. Dolben earneſtly called upon the Houſe to adopt the moſt mild and limited mode of puniſhment the emergency would permit.

The

The Solicitor General enlarged upon the magnitude of the offence, and contended for the propriety of a severe punishment.

The Committee divided,

Ayes	- -	80
Noes	- -	13
Majority	-	67

The Committee then proceeded to fill up the blanks in the other clauses; and when the most material clause in the whole Bill came under consideration, namely, that which was to empower the magistrates to declare the assembly unlawful, upon any matter being propounded that should appear to be unlawful, or tending to sedition, &c. and to dissolve the meeting, &c. the whole clause was struck out.

The Bill is made to commence in the metropolis, and within 20 miles of it, the day after it shall have received the Royal assent, and within seven days all over the kingdom.

The Solicitor General proposed, that the Bill should continue in force for three years.

Mr. Stanley proposed one year, which being objected to, he offered to agree to two years, which was refused, on which the Committee divided,

Ayes (for the term of three years)	46
Noes (for the term of three years)	2
Majority	44

The Bill then passed the Committee, and the Report was received immediately; ordered to be taken into consideration on Tuesday, and that the Bill be printed.

To the Honourable the Commons of Great-Britain in Parliament assembled; the Humble Petition of the undersigned, (presented by Mr. Fox, November 27,)

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioner in the strongest manner condemns and reprobates all such outrages on peace and order, and all such flagitious insults as appear to have been offered to his Majesty on the 1st day of the present Session of Parliament; and thinks the offenders ought, if possible, to be discovered; and, if discovered and convicted, to be punished in the most exemplary mannar; and he presumes the laws now in being fully adequate to that salutary end; as well as to the still more important one, of preventing, as far as law can prevent, the high crime of Treason; provided those laws be duly resorted to and faithfully administered.

Holding these sentiments, your Petitioner has viewed with the deepest horror the attempts now making in both Houses of Parliament, by certain persons in power, to introduce into the criminal law of England such a change as, in the opinion of your Petitioner, must, if successful, remove from his mind every idea of his living under a free Government.

Your Petitioner humbly conceives the proposed "Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and another "Bill for the more effectual preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," to be wholly unnecessary to the laws of this country, injurious to the interests, subversive of the liberties, and dishonouring the character of the nation; and pernicious also in the highest degree, in as much as those Bills, if made law, would have, to the apprehension of your Petitioner, a manifest tendency to foster and to aggravate the discontents of one part of the people; and, as soon as the prejudices of others shall by experience be done away, to beget in the community at large a settled and rooted dislike of the Government under which they should be doomed to live.

Your Petitioner certainly does believe, and indeed he knows, that great discontent at certain abuses and corruptions of the Constitution does exist amongst many of the people, whose anxious attachment to the Constitution has taught them to study its principles, and to consider by what line of conduct, both on the part of the people, and of their rulers, that Constitution is to be preserved. That sort of discontent, your Petitioner is not ashamed to own, he himself has long and deeply felt, and largely shared; nor does he wish to conceal from your Honourable House, that the views he has taken of the abuses and corruptions he speaks of have filled his mind with the most melancholy presages of the approaching loss of British Liberty! nor can he now entertain a better hope, unless certain measures, congenial with the true principles and obvious maxims of our Constitution be speedily adopted by your Honourable House; he need not say, they must be measures of a complexion as different from the dreadful Bills now pending, as light from darkness.

Here your Petitioner most humbly intreats your Honourable House to look into its own Journals, for a Petition presented to it on the 6th day of May, 1793; and to review the same Petition, with that serious attention, that full deliberation, and that impartial regard to the most important right of Englishmen, which the subject matter of that Petition so well deserves to have bestowed upon it.

That Petition, as your present Petitioner is credibly informed and believes, states, amongst a great variety of particulars of high importance, the following facts and inferences, and in the following words namely;

"That at the present day, the House of Commons does not fully and fairly represent the People of England, which, consistently with what your Petitioners conceive to be the principles of the Constitution, they consider as a grievance, and therefore, will all becoming respect, lay their complaints before your Honourable House."

Again:—" Your Petitioners, in affirming that your Honourable House is not an adequate Representation of the People of England, do but state a fact, which, if the word 'Representation' be accepted in its fair and obvious

sense,

ſenſe, they are ready to prove, and which they think detrimental to their intereſt, and contrary to the ſpirit of the Conſtitution."

Again:—"Your Petitioners muſt now beg leave to call the attention of your Honourable Houſe to the greateſt evil produced by theſe defects in the Repreſentation," [Referring to a long enumeration of defects, beſides thoſe here quoted,] "of which they complain; namely, the extent of Private Parliamentary Patronage; an abuſe which obviouſly tends to exclude the great maſs of the people from any ſubſtantial influence in the election of the Houſe of Commons, and which, in its progreſs, threatens to uſurp the ſovereignty of the country, to the equal danger of the King, of the Lords, and of the Commons."

Again:—"The operation of the firſt ſpecies of patronage is direct, and ſubject to poſitive proof. Eighty-four individuals do, by their own immediate authority, ſend One Hundred and Fifty-ſeven of your Honourable Members to Parliament. And this your Petitioners are ready, if the fact be diſputed, to prove, and to name the Members and the Patrons."

"The ſecond ſpecies of patronage cannot be ſhewn with equal accuracy, though it is felt with equal force.

"Your Petitioners are convinced, that, in addition to the One Hundred and Fifty-ſeven Honourable Members above-mentioned, One Hundred and Fifty more, making in the whole Three Hundred and Seven, are returned to your Honourable Houſe, not by the collected voice of thoſe whom they appear to repreſent, but by the recommendation of ſeventy powerful individuals, added to the Eighty-four above mentioned, and making the total number of patrons altogether, only One Hundred and Fifty-four, who return a decided majority of your Honourable Houſe.

"If your Honourable Houſe will accept as evidence the common report and general belief of the Counties, Cities, and Boroughs, which return the Members alluded to, your Petitioners are ready to name them, and to prove the fact; or if the Members in queſtion can be made parties to the inquiry, your Petitioners will name them, and be governed by the teſtimony which they themſelves ſhall publicly give."

If then, the allegations here recited be true, and your Petitioner has been credibly informed they were not ſo much as queſtioned by any Member of your Honourable Houſe when placed on its Journals, he hopes he may, without giving offence to your Honourable Houſe (all intention of which he ſincerely diſclaims, as on this ſolemn occaſion he ſhould think ſuch conduct highly indecent and reprehenſible) he hopes, he ſays, he may aſk, where are to be found the three diſtinct, independant, and balancing powers of the Engliſh Conſtitution?

Monarchy and Ariſtocracy, indeed, hold their reſpective places, undiminiſhed in ſplendour, and apparently poſſeſſing their conſtitutional ſhares in the Government: But when your Petitioner looks for democracy, when he ſeeks the awfully majeſtic Repreſentative Body of this great nation, emphatically ſtiled *the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled*, preſumed to emanate from, and to be identified with the great maſs of the people, touched by their every grievance, and ſympathizing in all their natural and honourable feelings, does he find ſuch a Repreſentative Body to exiſt? Do not the Journals of your Honourable Houſe, on the contrary, inform him that a decided majority of your Honourable Houſe are returned, "not by the collected voice

of thofe whom they appear to reprefent," but under the private patronage, or by the immediate authority of One Hundred and Fifty four individuals?

If thefe alarming allegations be true, if One Hundred and Fifty-four perfons can, and actually do, at their own independent will and pleafure, to the grievous wrong of the people, feat in your Honourable Houfe a majority of its Members, muft not thofe perfons of courfe have its determinations at command; and, will not fuch a ftate of things amount to the demonftration of a fact, which, keenly as it may be felt by your Petitioner, rather than exprefs, he will leave to be inferred by your Honourable Houfe.

If thefe afflicting allegations be true, has there not crept into the Government, through an infenfible decay, which needs to be repaired, an alarming, a portentous power; a mighty irrefiftible fomething, diftinct from, and paramount to all the Conftitutional Eftates of the realm? A power of a character utterly unknown to our Conftitution, and abhorrent to the principles of our Government; a power for which political writers have, indeed, an appropriate appellation; but one fo odious, that your Petitioner, out of refpect to your Honourable Houfe, and from his feelings of reverence for the genuine Conftitution of his Country, will forbear to exprefs?

And, if fuch a dreadful power have, in the nature of a difeafe, grown out of the gradually-increafing decay of popular Reprefentation; and have at its difpofal the public purfe, and confequently, dependent on its will, the fupplies to the executive magiftrate, can even his Majefty be fuppofed to be beyond the reach of its overbearing fway? Muft not the Peerage be eclipfed by the One Hundred and Fifty-four; and all the juft ends of Reprefentation to the People be defeated; while their every intereft fhall be fubmitted to the power of men, in whofe election or appointment they have neither fhare, controul, or influence?

And if it be likewife true, as farther ftated in the aforefaid Petition of the 6th of May, 1793, and of which the then Petitioners tendered "legal evidence that Forty Peers, in defiance of your refolutions, have poffeffed themfelves of fo many burgage tenures, and obtained fuch an abfolute and uncontrouled command in very many fmall boroughs in the kingdom, as to be enabled, by their own pofitive authority, to return Eighty-one of your Honourable Members;" and that the faid then Petitioners alfo had "the moft reafonable grounds to fufpect (which grounds of fufpicion they declared themfelves ready to fhew at the Bar of your Honourable Houfe), that no lefs than One Hundred and Fifty of your Honourable Members owe their elections entirely to the interference of Peers; if thefe things be true, then your Petitioner humbly conceives, while alarms are fo induftrioufly propagated of *attempts and confpirings againft the Conftitution*, that attempts fuch as *thefe*, confpirings fo daring and fo criminal, ftrokes fo fweeping, to remove the pillars of the fabric, ought not to pafs without a full and rigid inveftigation; and the more fo, as the truth or the falfehood of the allegations can fo eafily be afcertained by your Honourable Houfe.

Lord Chancellor Somers, as every Member of your Honourable Houfe muft know, in a Treatife on Government, has truly faid, that "*Treafon is a betraying of the State; and the greateft and higheft treafon is that which is committed againft the Conftitution.*" If, then, the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament affembled be a part, a vital, a facred part of the Conftitution; if it be only on the principle of *Reprefentation* that your Honourable Houfe

can

can be entitled to that appellation; if sitting in your Honourable House constitutionally implies popular election; and if a loss to the people, either by encroachment or otherwise, of a majority of the seats in your Honourable House, have actually taken place, as so strongly set forth, without denial or question, in the Petition on your Journals to which your present Petitioner now refers; then, he humbly presumes, it will follow, as a necessary conclusion, that the Constitution has indeed received a deep and deadly wound; there may not have been treason in the intention, but no man can deny, that he who more or less destroys the essence of the House of Commons betrays the State.

Should any men beneath the degree of Baron, even Members of your Honourable House, usurp but for a day seats among the Peers, arrogating to themselves the functions of Lords of Parliament, would not astonishment and indignation strike every breast? And would not the Constitution itself shake to its centre, if possession could be held of those seats, to pass as private property from hand to hand? Or, if any Privy Counsellor should dare to step with the King into his Throne on the meeting of Parliament, and hidden fetters should also be discovered under the Royal robe, would not a cry of "*Treason*" burst from every tongue? Are there, then, your Petitioner humbly asks your Honourable House, only two Estates of the Realm which are to be hedged in, and secured by a sacred inviolability, while the third, like a neglected common, is to have its fences trampled under foot, and to become the spoil of every lawless trespasser? No: Your Honourable House will, doubtless, awaken to the necessity of expelling invaders, and guarding against future incroachment. And it is for your Honourable House seriously to consider, whether reflecting men can believe that either of the two Bills now pending would ever have seen the light, had not their movers been encouraged to such attacks on the liberties of the People, from the traces of popular Representation in your Honourable House being so nearly worn out and obliterated.

As these Bills have been ushered in, like other inauspicious acts of their authors, with dark insinuations of criminality against men known to profess themselves the advocates for a Reform in your Honourable House, and such insinuated criminality of these men is made the indecent, the monstrous pretext for uprooting the freedom of all men, it may not be unworthy of your Honourable House to bestow a few moments of your attention, on some circumstances respecting those who come within the general description of Friends to Parliamentary Reform; men who, although differing in opinion on subordinate points, are agreed in that one object from which the appellation has been given them.

The Reformers are charged with discontent. So far from denying this charge, they have, for the last fifteen years, from time to time, come to your Honourable House to make known this discontent, to shew its cause, and to pray for the removal of both cause and effect. If they are not yet disburthened of their grief, it is because your Honourable House hath not yet thought proper even to inquire into the justness of their complaint.

The Reformers are accused of conspiring to overthrow the Constitution. False and extravagant as is this accusation, they may not be surprized at it; and for the following reasons: 1st, Because by *their* exertions to bring to light the conspirings of other men against the Constitution, the truth was daily becoming manifest to the nation. 2dly, Because men interested in uphold-

ing the corruptions of the State, which caufed the difcontent complained of, had in their hands the annual application and expenditure of feventeen millions of public money; and, as appears to your Petitioner, without being under any fufficient controul. 3dly, Becaufe the faid men had alfo in their hands every other means which the Government and patronage of a great Empire can be fuppofed to afford, for influencing the public opinion; and, if capable of fo atrocious a crime, of fpreading through the land falfe alarms and delufions, which not even truth could refift or oppofe without the aid of time. And laftly, Becaufe the very nature of the cafe required that, in order to direct the public attention from thofe corruptions and decays in the very frame of the Government, and thofe confpirings againft the Conftitution which the Reformers were fo fuccefsfully expofing, they themfelves fhould be charged with the crime, and their caufe, if poffible, brought into difrepute. Fraud, panic, and delufion have had their day: but your Petitioner trufts in time, as well as in the wifdom of your Honourable Houfe, and the difcernment of an Englifh people, for a true judgment being paffed between the Reformers and their opponents.

Your Honourable Houfe cannot be ignorant that, with particular reference to the pretended plots of Reformers, and to the ftate of thefe mens' minds, certainly not in a ftate of unfeeling apathy, but fuffering under a quick fenfe of unredreffed wrongs—and as a fpecial reafon for not adminiftering that political medicine, a Parliamentary Reform, it has by their opponents been urged that *the times are too feverifh*; and yet they now behold Bills propofed by their opponents which, if the people of England are not become, politically fpeaking, a nation of dead carcafes, muft fpread a flame through the land. If, in an inflammatory ftate of the natural body, it were to be affigned as a reafon for withholding a powerful febrifuge, that *the fever ran too high*, and at the fame time the effence of whatever was moft inflammatory and irritating were thrown in, to work up the fever into a phrenzy, would not your Honourable Houfe think, that a phyfician fo acting were either a madman or a murderer!

Your Honourable Houfe will recollect at what period it was, that the proceedings of the Reformers firft gave Minifters ferious difturbance of mind, and as all the fubfequent matters muft be frefh in its memory, your Petitioner will not do more than juft touch on the moft prominent objects of attention; namely, the activity of the Reformers, and the hopes of fuccefs with which they were animated; the cenfures they hereupon incurred, the imputations thrown out againft them, the fpies placed around them, the feizure of papers containing all their plans of operation, the imprifonment of confpicuous perfons, their indictment for High Treafon, and, after a confiderable period of moft anxious fufpence to the nation, the trials that enfued.—And what at laft appeared? Why, it appeared, that mixed with the proceedings of fome of thefe men, in their great and virtuous caufe, there were on the part of individuals marks of indifcretion, rafhnefs, and folly; for they were men, and fome of them without the advantages of education:—It alfo appeared, that the fervours of fome had, even in the judgment of juries, hurried them into expreffions deemed feditious. But fedition, your Petitioner begs leave to obferve to your Honourable Houfe, is an undefined, and perhaps undefinable crime; an error of that peculiar nature, that in bad times, the bafe and the fervile are perhaps lefs likely to fall into it, than thofe who feel a generous indignation at their country's

 wrongs.

wrongs. A Sidney and a Ruſſel were accounted ſeditious, when a Jefferies was the pattern of loyalty. The only perſon whom your Petitioner recollects to have been convicted of Treaſon, (except a man whom he believes was afterwards pardoned) was an acknowledged ſpy, and under circumſtances that may account for his conduct in the line of his vocation; a man, if his own account of himſelf may be credited, tinctured with fanaticiſm, if not with inſanity.

But your Petitioner, with much deference, aſks again,—What, after all the agitating alarms, after all the ſucceſsful diligence of Government in ſecuring perſons and papers, and after trials, ſuch as never before oppreſſed the Bench and the Bar with the labours of inveſtigation, what has been brought to light reſpecting the Reformers, that it imports the nation to know?—Your Petitioner will tell your Honourable Houſe what has been brought to light.—This has been brought to light:—That the Conſtitution has already been grievouſly injured and undermined; and that nothing but the meaſures which the Reformers point out, and have been purſuing,—meaſures which they have again and again preſſed upon the atttention of the public and of your Honourable Houſe, can avert its ſpeedy deſtruction.—And your Petitioner, with great humility, will alſo beg leave to inform your Honourable Houſe, what has *not* been brought to light concerning the Reformers. In all this ſifting of their actions, and even of their very thoughts, there was not diſcovered the ſmalleſt ground for charging them with criminally conſpiring to ſeize on *one hundred and fifty* ſeats in your Honourable Houſe, and ſell them to Peers, or with any attempt at transferring *a decided majority* of thoſe ſeats to *one hundred and fifty-four* men, to be held and inherited as private property; giving the poſſeſſors of thoſe ſeats ſuch irreſponſible and irreſiſtable power, as to make them, if not in name and in form, yet to all ſubſtantial purpoſes, Sovereigns of their Sovereign; Lords of the only Lords we acknowledge, and, in reſpect of the people, that which the Engliſh Conſtitution does not know; that which no free government can know; and that which your Petitioner cannot expreſs to your Honourable Houſe, but in language that is a contradiction in terms.—Unchoſen Repreſentatives; and with full power over the property, the lives, and liberty of us all.—No: ſuch horrid conſpirings to pull down and to ſubvert from its very foundations the Britiſh Government and Conſtitution, belong not to the Reformers.

As amongſt other charges that have been imputed to the Reformers, ſtand thoſe of aiming at an invaſion of ariſtocratic rights, and ſtriking at the conſtitutional privileges of the Peerage; your Petitioner cannot but obſerve, that upon the Peers who are ſaid to have ſeized on ſo many ſeats in your Honourable Houſe, ſuch alarms do not appear to have made much impreſſion; or they could not court retaliation, by being the perſons to ſet an example, or continue in the practice of invading the rights, and deſtroying the privileges of the Commons.—And how will your Honourable Houſe reconcile the pretended zeal of ſome men, aſſociated for ſupporting a Conſtitution of King, Lords, and Commons, with that utter indifference, if not approbation, with which they look on, while ſo many Peers ſtand charged, by Petition to your Honourable Houſe, with openly, in broad day, ſeizing on its ſacred ſeats; and attempting to draw every power of that Conſtitution within the dreadful vortex of an unbalanced ariſtocracy?

Your

Your Petitioner finds it to be an object of one of the Bills now pending, to make it puniſhable in any man who, by writing or ſpeaking, ſhall incite another man or men to think ill of "*the eſtabliſhed Government and Conſtitution*," by feeling towards them the ſentiments of diſlike, or contempt, or hatred, or ſome ſuch paſſion. Now, as every paſſion of the human mind is only excited by its correſponding motive; ſo certain proviſions in a Conſtitution, or certain actions in rulers, will excite one paſſion; and others will excite another. By the ſpirit and letter of this Bill, then, if through any preſent defects, or future breaches of the Conſtitution, (and who can ſay what it may be a year hence, if the people do not protect their rights) we ſhould ever experience any groſs injuſtice, or wanton tyranny, this law would doom us to ſilence; and the greater our miſery, the more certain ſhould we be of incurring puniſhment by the mention of it. Sentiments of contempt muſt be felt towards a Government and Conſtitution incapable of ſhielding us from wrong; and if the oppreſſion ſhould be extreme, hatred and deteſtation of ſuch Government and Conſtitution muſt be a neceſſary conſequence. By the very mention, therefore, of our wrongs, in the ſituation here ſuppoſed, we ſhould excite in our hearers the correſponding paſſions, and conſequently become obnoxious to puniſhment.

By the ſecond of theſe Bills, the ſacred conſtitutional right of petitioning the Legiſlature for redreſs of grievances is ſo directly ſtruck at, and if the Bill were to paſs into a law, would be ſo completely annihilated, that it would be a waſte of words to trouble your Honourable Houſe with any remarks upon the wording of that Bill.

Your Petitioner, therefore, thinking it would be a diſgrace to human nature to live under ſuch laws, humbly truſts your Honourable Houſe will not ſuffer them to ſully an Engliſh Statute Book; or to alienate the minds of the people from the Laws, the Government, and Conſtitution of their country.

Nor ſhould your Petitioner feel juſtified to his own mind, if he did not remark, that while theſe Bills affect to ſhield, they in reality ſtab the Conſtitution; and under the flimſy pretence of ſupporting its honour, they go directly, and by the ſhorteſt road, and therefore in his conſcience he believes them ſolely intended by their movers, to eſtabliſh and perpetuate its corruptions and abuſes, by cutting off all communication between man and man, and making it one of the greateſt of our crimes to utter the greateſt of our wrongs, while theſe corruptions and abuſes are to be ſanctioned and ſecured, under the magic phraſe of "the ESTABLISHED Government and Conſtitution."

Your Petitioner, therefore, feels it a ſolemn duty he owes his country—he hopes in God it may not be the laſt he may be enabled to perform—to urge, with all the importunity conſiſtent with reſpect, the preſent imperious neceſſity of a Reform in the Repreſentation of the People in your Honourable Houſe; as the beſt and only permanent ſecurity which they can have for their liberties againſt all attempts; as that alone which can remove diſcontents, and fix the Conſtitution in their hearts; and as the only natural way, and therefore the beſt, to reconcile them to the burthens of taxation, and the wholeſome reſtraints of equitable law and juſt government.

And your Petitioner ſhall ever pray, &c. &c.

JOHN CARTWRIGHT.

Brothertoft Farm, *Nov.* 1, 1795.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

MEETING OF BREAD-STREET WARD.

AS ſoon as Alderman Langſton took the Chair,

MR. WELDON roſe, and wiſhed to call the attention of the Gentlemen preſent to the vigour of the Engliſh laws, which he aſſerted was perfectly adequate to the preſervation of the public peace. And as a great deal had been ſaid againſt them at this moment, to aſſiſt in the paſſing of theſe obnoxious Bills; if there was a defect, which he did not believe, he called upon any Gentlemen preſent to point it out. After a ſilence of a few minutes, Mr. Weldon continued—he thought he was right, the Laws were good ones—and he took it for granted their ſilence recogniſed them.

MR. WILLCOCK then roſe, and ſaid, it is with great diffidence, that I riſe to addreſs the Meeting on the preſent occaſion, not being in the habit of public ſpeaking; but through the indiſpoſition of one of the Gentlemen who has taken an active part in procuring this Meeting, it falls to my lot to ſay a few words, previous to ſubmitting ſome Reſolutions to their conſideration. And notwithſtanding I am well perſuaded, that the cauſe will ſuffer from not being in better hands, and that it merits an abler advocate, yet feeling, as I do, the importance of the preſent buſineſs, I dare not refuſe it my feeble aid.

The purport of the Meeting is fully expreſſed in the requiſition, namely, "to take into conſideration the alarming tendency of Two Bills now pending in Parliament—intituled 'An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts,' and 'An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings;' and to conſider the propriety of petitioning againſt them." Bills, Sir, which are a direct violation of the Bill of Rights, which attempt to deprive us of the free diſcuſſion of our grievances, and of the right, which we are this day aſſembled to exerciſe, ſhould the neceſſity of petitioning againſt them meet with the approbation of this Meeting.

The latter of theſe Bills goes to the complete annihilation of the 5th and 10th articles of the Bill of Rights, which ſays——

V. That it is the Right of the Subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and proſecutions for ſuch petitioning are illegal.

X. That exceſſive Bail ought not to be required, nor exceſſive fines impoſed, nor cruel and unuſual puniſhments inflicted.

And Judge Blackſtone ſays, Vol. I, p. 234,——

"That the King of England muſt rule his People according to the decrees of the Laws thereof, inſomuch that he is bound by an oath at his coronation, to the obſervance and keeping of his own laws."

Now Sir, the Bill of Rights being an eſſential part of the Conſtitution, as ſettled at the Revolution, what are we to think of men that can adviſe his Majeſty to adopt ſuch meaſures, as are a direct violation of every principle of Law and Juſtice? It muſt be clearly ſeen that they cannot have the good of their Sovereign at heart, nor the happineſs of his People. For theſe Bills are calculated to produce the utmoſt "hatred and contempt of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government." They are calculated to make the King arbitrary and deſpotic, and inſtead of ſwaying the ſceptre in mercy, to rule with a rod of iron.

Theſe

These Bills must have been introduced for the purpose of keeping themselves in their places—to prevent the people from complaining of their measures, however oppressive and nefarious, and to pursue without controul that system, which has nearly brought the nation to ruin. Sedition is made the ostensible cause, but the real cause is the completion of a system, which will end in the destruction of all our liberties, civil and sacred!

These Bills are links of a long lengthened chain, that begins with depriving us of the right of complaining, and will end with lists of proscription.

If they are suffered to pass, they will constitute the Minister a Robespierre, be he who he may, and we may then prepare for Botany-bay or a halter, if we dare to lift up our voice against such a monster. We shall be put under the same system of terror and despotism which has disgraced the annals of the French Revolution. We shall go back into the horrors of the last century, when pretended plots and forged schemes were set on foot to bring a Russell to the scaffold—when spies and informers were fostered and rewarded—perjury connived at, and the nation groaned in sullen silence, till their great Deliverer, William III. was placed on the throne.

The necessity of petitioning against them is evident from the general ferment they have created in the public mind, and the danger that threatens us if they pass.

What else does the conduct of Ministers imply, when they are collecting a vast force in and about the capital, to dragoon the People into the harsh and severe measures which these Bills contain.

If, therefore, we have any regard for property, peace, and order, we shall follow the examples of the Livery of London, and the first counties in point of weight and influence in the kingdom, and petition against them. Are we therefore enemies to the country, because we deprecate anarchy and confusion and stand forward the advocates of peace? Are the Noble Peers and Honourable Commoners, men of the largest property, weight and influence, that have opposed these Bills, enemies of their country? Away then with these terms of reproach!

It is invidious and unmanly to calumniate the friends of Freedom, because they are hostile to those measures of administration, which are likely to involve the country in one general ruin. I will yield to no man in loyalty to the King, and love to my country, and because I love my King and country, and derive many benefits from its liberties and laws, I feel gratitude to my ancestors for procuring and transmitting these blessings to me.

But alas! what our ancestors waded through seas of blood, and fires of persecution, to obtain for us, we are by these Bills called to sacrifice at one stroke. No, Sir, I will never agree to the fatal stab, which these Bills aim at the vitals of the Constitution. I will never put my hand to the death-warrant of my country's liberties, by signing an Address to pass these nefarious Bills. I will say with the Noble Apostle St. Paul—"I was free born," and with the Hon. Mr. Erskine, (by the Grace of God) I will not die a slave. I therefore move the Resolutions ——

[These our readers have seen in the Advertisement.]

The first was carried unanimously, the second produced a debate.

Mr. Deputy Hallier, opposed it, but contented himself with only observing the laws were not efficacious enough.

Mr.

Mr. Athaws reprobated the conduct of Minifters in bringing in thefe Bills, and concluded by giving his hearty concurrence to petitioning againft them.

Mr. Weldon rofe, and believed Gentlemen prefent had not read the Bills in queftion, and if they had read them, did not underftand them; on which account he would read them, with his comments on each claufe. He went through the Bills, and made a number of very ftrong and forcible remarks as he went along; he was interrupted feveral times, but at laft concluded with faying, that it was perfectly immaterial to him whether the Bills paffed or not, for if they did not pafs, the people would be amufed with the thoughts of having liberty which they have not; but upon the whole, he would decidedly agree to petition againft them.

Mr. Matthew made a very argumentative fpeech againft the Bills, and in favour of petitioning againft them.

Mr. Nailer entered into the argument of people correfponding with the Rulers of France, but gave it as his opinion, the Bills fhould have only a limited duration, and concluded by voting againft the fecond refolution.

Mr. David Jones reprobated, in ftrong terms, the alarming tendency of thefe Bills, and declared they were a direct violation of the Bill of Rights.

And without any arguments being adduced on the other fide, on the 2d, 3d, and 4th Refolutions, when feverally put, there appeared a majority of about 15 votes againft them.

A letter was read from one of the Common Council after the opening, by Mr. Willcock, ftating his indifpofition, and his forrow for not attending.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY MEETING.

AT a Meeting of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants of the County of Southampton, holden purfuant to public notice, at the Caftle of Winchefter, in the faid county, on Thurfday the 26th day of Nov. 1795,

WITHER BRAMSTON, Efq. Sheriff, in the Chair,

Refolved unanimoufly, on the motions of Sir John Pollen, Bart. feconded by Lovelace Bigg Wither, Efq. That an Addrefs of Congratulation to his Majefty, on his late providential efcape from an attack on his facred perfon, when about to exercife the moft important function of his regal authority, be figned by the Sheriff, on behalf of the Meeting, and prefented by him to his Majefty, attended by Sir William Heathcote, Bart. and William Chute, Efq. the reprefentatives of the county.

Refolved, with five diffentient, on the motion of the Right Honourable Thomas Orde Powlett, feconded by the Right Honourable the Marquis of Winchefter, That a Petition be prefented to the Honourable the Houfe of Commons, by the Reprefentatives of the county, praying them to adopt fome effectual meafures to fecure the continuance and enjoyment of our true Conftitutional Privileges from the dangers to which they are expofed, by the doctrines inculcated by certain Seditious Societies; and that copies thereof be fent to the feveral market towns, and left for the fignatures of thofe who fhall approve thereof, who may not have had opportunities of attending this Meeting.

Refolved unanimoufly, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Sheriff, for his ready compliance with the wifhes of the county in calling an early Meeting, and for his upright and impartial conduct thereat.

Refolved

Reſolved unanimouſly, on the motion of the Rev. Dr. Rennell, ſeconded by the Marquis of Wincheſter, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Right Honourable Thomas Orde Powlet, for having with ſo much eloquence, ability and effect, marked the cloſe connection between the late attack on the life of his Majeſty, and the deteſtable doctrines diſſeminated by Seditious Clubs; and for having propoſed a Petition to the Honourable the Houſe of Commons founded thereon.

Reſolved and ordered, That copies of the Addreſs and Petition, and of theſe Reſolutions, be printed once in each of the Provincial Papers, and in two of the London Papers.

Signed on behalf of the Meeting,

WITHER BRAMSTON, Sheriff.

THE Hampſhire County Meeting, held at Wincheſter on Thurſday the 26th, was the fulleſt and beſt attended of any ever remembered. There were preſent at leaſt 500 of the moſt reſpectable Inhabitants, conſiſting of Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants and Tradeſmen, who with zeal and unanimity concurred in a Congratulatory Addreſs to our beloved Sovereign, on his late providential eſcape from the wicked attempt made on his ſacred perſon, when about to exerciſe the moſt important functions of his regal authority; which was moved by Sir John Pollen, Bart. and ſeconded by the Marquis of Wincheſter.

Immediately after which, the Right Honourable Mr. Orde Powlett, in a ſpeech which carried conviction to the mind of almoſt every one preſent, ſeconded by the Marquis of Wincheſter, moved that a Petition ſhould be preſented to the Houſe of Commons, praying that Houſe to adopt ſome effectual meaſures to ſecure the continuance and enjoyment of our true Conſtitutional Privileges, from the dangers to which they are expoſed by the doctrines inculcated in certain Seditious Societies; againſt which no one offered any motion; but the Sheriff deſiring a ſhew of hands, there appeared diſſentient five out of the 500.

The Petition was immediately ſigned by every one preſent, with the above exception; and ſuch was the eagerneſs with which numerous other friends of the Conſtitution came forward on this occaſion, that the copies of the Petition could not be engroſſed faſt enough; in conſequence of which many were diſappointed of an immediate opportunity of ſigning their names; but the duplicates were to be ſent to the market towns, where they were to remain for ſignatures till this day.

The Thanks of the Meeting were unanimouſly voted to the Sheriff, for his ready compliance with the wiſhes of the county, in calling the Meeting, and for his upright and impartial conduct thereat. Thanks were alſo unanimouſly voted to Mr. Orde Powlett, as the mover of the Petition to the Houſe of Commons.

Theſe proceedings cannot fail to reſcue this loyal county from the odium often attempted to involve it in, by a few diſapppointed and factious individuals.

ST.

ST. MARGARET AND ST. JOHN, *Nov.* 26, 1795.

AT a Meeting of ſeveral reſpectable Inhabitants of theſe Pariſhes,

Sir JOSEPH MAWBEY, Bart. in the Chair,

It was reſolved, That the Inhabitants of the Pariſhes of St. Margaret and St. John, Weſtminſter, be requeſted to meet on Monday next, the 30th inſt. at the Guildhall, in King-ſtreet, at twelve o'clock, to take into conſideration the two Bills now depending in Parliament, by which their rights and liberties, as claimed and aſſerted by their anceſtors, are threatened with utter extinction.

The independent Inhabitants will then have an opportunity of ſupporting the Petition propoſed by the Duke of Bedford, in Palace-yard, on Monday the 16th inſtant.

LONDON TAVERN, *Nov.* 27.

AT a Meeting held here this day—preſent

SAMUEL BOSANQUET, Eſq. in the Chair,

Rt. Hon. Thomas Harley,
Sir Charles Pole, Bart.
Sir James Sanderſon, Bart.
Sir Richard Neave, Bart.
William Albin, Eſq.
John William Anderſon, Eſq.
Thomas Bainbridge, Eſq.
Thomas Boddington, Eſq.
William Boſanquet, Eſq.
Alexander Champion, Eſq.
Abel Chapman, Eſq.
Joſeph Cotton, Eſq.
Thomas Dea, Eſq.
Joſeph Deniſon, Eſq.
George Dorrien, Eſq.
Richard Down, Eſq.
Joſeph Fletcher, Eſq.
George Grote, Eſq.
Daniel Giles, Eſq.
John Harman, Eſq.
Jeremiah Harman, Eſq.
Robert Hunter, Eſq.
John Pooley Kenſington, Eſq.
Beeſton Long, Eſq.
John Lubbock, Eſq.
William Manning, Eſq.
Job Mathew, Eſq.
John Melliſh, Eſq.
William Melliſh, Eſq.
Arnold Mello, Eſq.
Iſaac Minet, Eſq.
Thomas Parry, Eſq.
Rene Payne, Eſq.
John Puget, Eſq.
William Raikes, Eſq.
Thomas Raikes, Eſq.
John Read, Eſq.
Edward Simeon, Eſq.
John Smith, Eſq.
Alexander Hendras Sutherland, Eſq.
Samuel Thornton, Eſq.
Godfrey Thornton, Eſq.
John Whitmore, Eſq.
William Whitmore, Eſq.
Mark Weyland, Eſq.
Edward Kenſington, Eſq.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That it is expedient at the preſent important criſis that a Meeting ſhould be convened of ſuch Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of London, as have not joined in the Proceedings of ſome Meetings lately held at the Paul's Head Tavern, Cateaton-ſtreet, purporting to be Meetings of "the Merchants, Bankers, Manufacturers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of the City of London," in order to take into conſideration the propriety of making a declaration to the Public, that they have had no concern in the Proceedings and Reſolutions of thoſe Meetings, but that, on the contrary, they are of opinion it has become neceſſary for Parliament to adopt ſome temporary meaſures for the more effectual ſupport of peace and good order.

Reſolved,

Refolved, That a Meeting be held accordingly at Grocer's Hall, in the Poultry, on Wednefday next, the 2d day of December, 1795, at 12 o'clock at noon.

Refolved, That thefe Refolutions be figned by the Chairman, and printed in the public Papers.

SAM. BOSANQUET, Chairman.

BATH, Nov. 25.

A PETITION to the Houfe of Commons, execrating the two infernal Bills now depending, will go up to night for Mr. Crefpigny to prefent to-morrow. It is moft refpectably and numeroufly figned. It contains feven fkins of parchment very clofe and full.

I beg leave at the fame time to inform you how the other was obtained, as you well know you may rely on the truth of what I tell you.

The Bath Prefentations confifted of an Addrefs and two Petitions, which have been always reprefented as joined together, all figned by, and coming from, the Meeting of the Citizens and Vifitors of this City, called together by public advertifement—Judge, from what I ftate, how far this is true.

An advertifement was put forth in the Bath Papers, and it was made public that a Meeting was to be held for the purpofe of addreffing his Majefty on his efcape from the late atrocious attack on his perfon, and for this purpofe only.

It was very well attended, and the Addrefs, which was drawn up by a Committee of the Clergy, and confequently much ftronger than many thought neceffary, was carried unanimoufly. After this, to the furprife of all, a young Scots Phyfician, lately a violent democrat, and who found his principles fo violent and odious as to impede his practice, arofe, and propofed the two Petitions praying for the paffing of the Bills, which, with much clamour, was faid to be carried, but which Petitions were not figned by half the people prefent who had figned the Addrefs.

CITY OF YORK.

AT one of the moft numerous and Meeting Meetings ever held in the Guildhall of the City of York, on Tuefday, Nov. 24, 1795, in purfuance of public notice from the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor,

(The LORD MAYOR in the Chair,)

Refolved unanimoufly,

1ft, That the late atrocious attack upon his Majefty's Perfon meets with the utmoft abhorrence and deteftation of this Meeting.

2d, (four only diffenting) That under the preffing calamities and diftreffes of the people, and the critical circumftances of thefe kingdoms, the further profecution of the prefent difaftrous war will be dangerous and impolitic, as well as unfeeling and cruel; and that the bleffings of peace are effential to the prefervation and permanence of our excellent Conftitution, to the real happinefs of our Moft Gracious Sovereign, and to the profperity of his fubjects.

3d, (four only diffenting) That we fhould prefent an humble and dutiful Addrefs to his Majefty, expreffive of thefe fentiments. [See Appendix.]

4th, Unanimoufly, That the fuperior rank and importance of Great Britain, in the fcale of the nations of the world, have depended upon the fuperior

rior excellence of her political conſtitution, the ſpirit of which recognizes a due and equable balance between the legal prerogatives of the King and the rights and liberties of the ſubject, and which balance can only be maintained by the continuance of free, open, frequent, and unreſtrained communications between the People and the Legiſlative Body.

5th, Unanimouſly, That ſuch communications were conſidered at the æra of the glorious Revolution in 1688, as a part of that wiſe and happy ſyſtem which placed the illuſtrious Houſe of Brunſwick upon the Throne of theſe Realms, as appears by a diſtinct ſubſtantial clauſe in the Bill of Rights.

6th, (three only diſſenting) That two Bills now depending in Parliament, the one entitled, " An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and the other, " An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," are in their ſpirit and tendency repugnant to that ſyſtem, and ſubverſive of the true principles of that Revolution, by creating new and accumulated Treaſons, and by ſubjecting the free deliberation upon laws and grievances to checks and controul, as unprecedented as they are incompatible with fair diſcuſſion, and the rights of private judgment, and thereby alienating the affection of the people from the Conſtitution, and leſſening their reſpect for the laws.

7th, (three only diſſenting) That the laws now in force are fully adequate to the ſecurity of his Majeſty's perſon, and ſufficient to reſtrain or puniſh the improper uſe or licentious abuſe of the Conſtitutional Right of the People to prefer their petitions, or preſent their remonſtrances, to all or any of the branches of the Legiſlature.

8th, (two only diſſenting) That we ſhould prefer a Petition to the Hon. Houſe of Commons, humbly praying that the ſaid Bills may not be ſuffered to paſs into laws.

9th, Unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir William Mordaunt Milner, Bart. and Richard Slater Milnes, Eſq. the worthy Repreſentatives in Parliament for this City, for their ſteady oppoſition to the preſent ruinous War, and for their independent and attentive conduct in Parliament.

10th, Unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor, for his readineſs in calling the Meeting, and for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

11th, Unanimouſly, That the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor be requeſted to ſign theſe Reſolves as the act of this Meeting, and to publiſh the ſame.

R. METCALFE, Mayor.

The following is a Copy of the Petition voted in conſequence of the foregoing Reſolutions, with only two diſſenting voices.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great-Britain in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the City of YORK,

SHEWETH,

That the ſuperior rank and importance of Great-Britain in the ſcale of the nations of the world have depended upon the ſuperior excellence of the Political Conſtitution; the ſpirit of which recognizes a due and equable balance between the legal prerogatives of the King, and the rights and liberties of the ſubject, which balance can only be maintained by the continuance of free, open, frequent, and unreſtrained communications between the people and the legiſlative body.

 That

That ſuch communications were conſidered at the æra of the Glorious Revolution in 1688, as a part of that wiſe and happy ſyſtem which placed the illuſtrious Houſe of Brunſwick upon the throne of theſe realms, as appears by a diſtinct ſubſtantial clauſe in the Bill of Rights.

That two Bills now depending in Parliament, the one intitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and the other, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," are in their ſpirit and tendency repugnant to that ſyſtem, and ſubverſive of the true principles of that Revolution, by creating new and accumulated treaſons, and by ſubjecting free deliberation upon laws or grievances to checks and controul, as unprecedented as they are incompatible with fair diſcuſſion and the rights of private judgment, and thereby alienating the affection of the people from the Conſtitution, and leſſening their reſpect for the laws.

That the laws now in force are fully adequate to the ſecurity of his Majeſty's perſon, and ſufficient to reſtrain or puniſh the improper uſe or licentious abuſe of the Conſtitutional right of the people, to prefer their Petitions or preſent their Remonſtrance to all or any branches of the Legiſlature.

Therefore we do humbly pray this Honourable Houſe that the ſaid Bills may not paſs into laws.

Copy of the Sheriff of YORK's Anſwer to the Requiſition—addreſſed to Meſſrs. TOWNSEND and WOOLEY, York.

"SIR, *Lancaſter, Saturday.*

"I have received your letters this morning, and muſt, upon due and full conſideration, give my moſt ſtrenuous oppoſition and negative to ſuch a proceeding, as I do not ſee what end it can poſſibly anſwer. A meeting of ſo large and unwieldy a body of men as the Freeholders of Yorkſhire, who are divided by ſuch a variety of oppoſite opinions and views, can only tend to raiſe riots and diſcontents. Should the Gentlemen who have ſigned the Requiſition think it neceſſary to meet of their own account, I certainly can ſay nothing againſt it. But I certainly muſt decline having any hand in the tranſaction. I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your moſt obedient ſervant,

"MARK SYKES."

"P. S. I am going to leave this place immediately, but have not as yet fixed my plan."

TO THE EDITOR.

OBSERVING in your Paper of this day, in the Debates of the Houſe of Commons, an aſſertion made by Alderman Anderſon, that the perſons who waited upon him with the Requiſition for calling the Ward of Alderſgate together, in reply to his refuſal, that they delivered themſelves in the following words, "That they were the more anxious to do it, becauſe Mr. Pitt had been Miniſter for a great many years, and they thought it was now high time for Mr Fox to be ſo," we beg leave to aſſert, in the moſt ſolemn manner, that there never paſſed, between the Alderman and the underſigned (who were the perſons deputed to, and did preſent the requiſition), any ſuch converſation as mentioned by the Alderman, and that the names of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were never introduced in any way whatever.

ROBERT ALB. COX. W. J. BURROWES.
Nov. 28th, 1795. J. HUXLEY. J. RIDER.

MORPETH,

MORPETH, *Nov.* 25, 1795.

AT a moſt numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the County of NORTHUMBERLAND, held here this day,

Sir J. E. SWINBURNE, Bart. in the Chair,

The following Addreſs to the King was carried with two diſſentient voices:

ADDRESS to the KING's Moſt Excellent Majeſty.

We, your Majeſty's moſt loyal and dutiful ſubjects, approach your Throne with every ſentiment of affection towards your Majeſty, to expreſs our deteſtation of the baſe attack lately made on your Majeſty's ſacred perſon.

But, whilſt we declare our abhorrence of that atrocious action, we think ourſelves called upon to ſtate our decided conviction of the ſufficiency of the preſent laws for the ſecurity of your Majeſty's Perſon and Government. Under this conviction we have ſeen with inexpreſſible alarm, that the outrage lately offered to your Majeſty has been uſed as a pretence for introducing into Parliament two Bills, one of which is entitled "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts; the other "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies." Theſe Bills we conceive to be unneceſſary, the Laws already in exiſtence having ſince the Revolution been found ſufficient in the moſt turbulent and critical times; but it is with ſorrow that we are alſo compelled to add, that they are ſo framed as, if paſſed into Laws, effectually to deſtroy our ancient and undoubted Rights, and by violating the fundamental parts of our invaluable Conſtitution, to render your Majeſty's Throne leſs ſecure, its firmeſt ſupport being the attachment of a free and loyal people.

Convinced therefore, that theſe Bills are not calculated to effect the purpoſes their authors profeſs to have in view, but whilſt they will inevitably deprive us of theſe ineſtimable privileges, which are our birthright as Britons, and perhaps expoſe even your Majeſty's ſacred perſon to danger, (a poſſibility which we cannot look to without the moſt lively apprehenſion): we humbly pray your Majeſty to exerciſe the power veſted in you by the Conſtitution, and to withhold your Royal Aſſent from theſe Bills, ſhould they be preſented to your Majeſty for that purpoſe.

After which the following Petition to both Houſes of Parliament was alſo carried, with only one diſſentient voice:

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County of NORTHUMBERLAND,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners have learnt with inexpreſſible alarm that a Bill hath been brought into your Honourable Houſe, entitled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies;" the proviſions of which Bill are, in the humble apprehenſion of your Petitioners, deſtructive of the Conſtitution, and ſubverſive of their ancient, true and undoubted Rights and Liberties.

That the Laws of England are the birth-right of the people thereof; that the right of public diſcuſſion and petitioning for the redreſs of grievances is their inalienable privilege, confirmed to them by divers ſtatutes of this realm.

That any attempt to reſtrain the people of England in the conſtitutional exerciſe of this their undoubted franchiſe has a tendency to overthrow the fundamental Laws of the kingdom, and to alienate the affections of the people from the eſtabliſhed Government.

 That

That your Petitioners, on the part of the People of England ſolemnly diſowning the charge of diſloyalty which this Bill imputes to them, do humbly repreſent that, in their judgment, the Laws in being are ſufficient, if duly executed, for the preſervation of the Public Peace; and that if they were not, it is inconſiſtent with the juſtice of this Honourable Houſe, that, for the tranſgreſſions of a few, the whole ſhould be disfranchiſed.

Your Petitioners do therefore humbly pray this Honourable Houſe, that the ſaid Bill may not paſs into a Law.

Your Petitioners beg leave further to repreſent to your Honourable Houſe, that the Bill now depending in your Honourable Houſe, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," hath created great diſquietude and alarm in the minds of your Petitioners.

Your Petitioners conceive the ſaid Bill to be unneceſſary, the old Laws of this Realm having, for centuries paſt, been found fully adequate to all the exigencies of the State; and any occaſional deviation from the ſame, by the introduction of "new-fangled Treaſons," having proved no leſs dangerous to the Safety of the Sovereign than fatal to the Liberties of the Subject.

That the vague and ambiguous terms in which the offences created by the ſaid Bills are deſcribed, render the Lives and Liberties of the People of England precarious and inſecure; ſo "that no man will know how he ought to behave himſelf, to do, ſpeak, or ſay, for doubt of ſuch pains of Treaſon."

Your Petitioners do therefore humbly pray this Honourable Houſe, that the ſaid Bill may not paſs into a Law; and that it may be recorded, that in no time to come any Treaſon be judged otherwiſe than was ordained by the Statute of King Edward III.

And your Petitioners ſhall ever pray, &c.

The following Reſolutions were afterwards unanimouſly adopted:

Reſolved,

I. That the Bill of Rights is an eſſential component part of that original contract between the King and People, recognized and confirmed at the æra of the Revolution.

II. That the Freedom of Public Diſcuſſion and Petitioning for Redreſs of Grievances is one of the ancient, true, and undoubted privileges of the People of England, ratified to them by the Bill of Rights.

III. That any attempt, directly or indirectly, to reſtrain or curtail the Freedom of Public Diſcuſſion is a violation of the Conſtitution, has a tendency to annul the Bill of Rights, and thereby to break the original contract between King and People.

IV. That we are fully convinced that the Laws now in being are equal to the protection of our beloved Sovereign, and that they are alſo ſufficient to ſuppreſs or diſperſe any Meetings which are ſeditious and tumultuous; wherefore, in proportion as we revere the Conſtitution, we are alarmed at two Bills now pending in Parliament, the tendency of which is to prevent a free and public diſcuſſion of public meaſures.

V. That, in our eſtimation, the odious principle of theſe Bills cannot be diminiſhed by the operation of them being limited to a ſhort duration of time. By admitting the introduction of them into the Houſe of Commons, the Repreſentatives of the People have implied a diſloyalty and diſaffection in their Conſtituents which we indignantly diſown, and have acted upon an

opinion which we cannot adopt, and which the experience of more than a century has falſified, viz. That the Safety of the Sovereign is incompatible with the Rights of the People.

VI. That this Meeting do entirely approve of the Parliamentary conduct of CHARLES GREY, Eſq. the Independent Repreſentative of this county, and particularly his preſent ſtrenuous oppoſition to the Bills now pending in Parliament.

VII. That Charles Grey, and Thomas R. Beaumont, Eſqrs. Repreſentatives in Parliament for this county, be inſtructed to uſe their utmoſt exertions to prevent the aforeſaid Bills from becoming a part of the laws of theſe Realms.

VIII. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to thoſe Members, of both Houſes of Parliament, who have boldly and virtuouſly oppoſed theſe obnoxious and unconſtitutional meaſures.

IX. That theſe Reſolutions be ſigned by the Chairman, and inſerted in the public Newſpapers. JOHN E. SWINBURNE, Chairman.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir J. E. Swinburne, Bart. for his able and impartial conduct in the Chair.

GLASGOW, Nov. 24, 1795.

At a Meeting of Merchants, Manufacturers, and Traders, at the Tontine Tavern, called to conſider the Bill now depending in Parliament, entituled, "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies." ALEXANDER OSWALD, Eſq. having been called to the Chair,

The following Reſolutions were moved and agreed to unanimouſly:—

I. That the Bill ſhould be oppoſed, as ſubverſive of one of the moſt ſacred principles of the Conſtitution.

II. That a Petition be preſented to the Honourable Houſe of Commons againſt the ſaid Bill; and that a Committee be ordered to draw up the ſame.

III. That the Hon. Tho. Erſkine be requeſted to preſent the ſaid Petition.

IV. That the Chairman do tranſmit the grateful acknowledgments of the Meeting to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, the Right Honourable Earl Lauderdale, the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, the Honourable Thomas Erſkine, R. B. Sheridan, Eſq. who, with the other Members of both Houſes of Parliament, ſo nobly ſtood forth, as friends to the Conſtitution, in oppoſing the ſaid Bill.

V. That the Petition now produced be approved of.

(Signed) ALEXANDER OSWALD, Chairman.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

"We, the Subſcribers, Merchants, Manufacturers, Traders, and other Inhabitants, of the City of Glaſgow, and its neighbourhood, eſteem it a duty which we owe to ourſelves and to the public, to petition your Honourable Houſe that the Bill now pending in Parliament, entituled, "a Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," may not paſs into a Law.

"We beg leave humbly to repreſent, that the Right of petitioning the King or Parliament, for the redreſs of grievances, is a fundamental principle in the Britiſh Conſtitution, and particularly ſecured by an expreſs article in the Bill of Rights, that Charter of our Liberties, eſtabliſhed at the Revolution.

"It is, therefore, with the utmoſt concern and aſtoniſhment, that we ſee an attempt made to overturn and deſtroy this privilege, by ſubjecting all

Meetings of the People, for the purpofe of deliberating on Public Affairs, to the difcretionary power of Magiftrates appointed by the Executive Government. In a mixed form of Government like that of Great Britain, any innovation, fubverfive of the popular part of our Conftitution, ought to be regarded as equally deftructive of our Liberties and Rights with a direct invafion of the Prerogatives of the Crown. Senfible of the neceffity of fuppreffing fedition and diforder, we are at the fame time convinced that the laws already exifting, and by which peace and good order have been fo long maintained, are fully fufficient for that purpofe; and we fear that additional reftrictions, accompanied by unufual and rigorous penalties, might excite fuch difcontents as would endanger the peace of the country.

"It muft imprefs every good fubject with forrow and regret, to obferve that the late atrocious attempt againft the perfon of his Majefty, which could only proceed from the moft abandoned and worthlefs part of the community, has been made the pretence for attempting innovations deftructive of our Rights and Liberties."

Petitions are lodged for fignatures at the Tontine Tavern, Black Bull Inn, Saracen's Head Coffee-Room, the Chapel of Eafe Seffion Houfe, and Mr. Dunn's Seffion Houfe, Campbell-ftreet, and it is requefted, that all thofe who intend to fubfcribe will do fo immediately.

AT a very numerous and refpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Borough of LEWES, the CLIFF, and SOUTHOVER, held on Friday, the 27th November, 1795, at the Town Hall, in LEWES aforefaid, for the purpofe of addreffing the King; and to confider of a Petition to the Houfe of Commons againft two Bills now pending in Parliament, the one intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies," and the other "An Act for preferving his Majefty's Perfon and Government againft Treafonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;"

THE CONSTABLES of LEWES in the Chair.

The bufinefs was opened by the fenior Conftable, who read the requifition, and thereby declared the purport of the Meeting.

MR. HOPER then rofe, and declared his difapprobation of the early call of the Meeting; the notice given, he faid, was not fufficient to afford the Inhabitants an opportunity of deciding on the important fubjects mentioned in the requifition: he therefore moved,

"That this Meeting be adjourned to Monday next." Henry Shelley, Efq. having feconded the motion, the fame was put, and negatived by a very great Majority.

Nine Gentlemen, who had voted for the Adjournment, then protefted againft the proceedings of the meeting, whatever they might be, and withdrew.

The following Addrefs was then propofed by Mr. Thomas Rickman, Merchant, and feconded by Henry Manning, Efq. [See Appendix.]

In the Town-Hall of Lewes, affembled by Public Notice, the 27th day of November, 1795,

Refolved Unanimoufly, That this Addrefs be approved of and figned by this Meeting: that the Conftables be requefted to offer it to the abfent Inhabitants for their fignatures; and that Thomas Kemp, Efq. one of the Reprefentatives of the Borough of Lewes, be requefted to prefent the fame to his Majefty.

The

The two Sedition Bills were then read; and the following Petition againſt them was propoſed by Mr. Whitfield, Banker, and ſeconded by W. Green, Eſq.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the ancient Borough of LEWES, and of the CLIFF, and SOUTHOVER, in the County of SUSSEX,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners entertain the moſt gloomy apprehenſions from the peruſal of two Bills now pending in Parliament; the one intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," and the other, "An Act for preſerving his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" it appearing to your Petitioners, that the ſaid Bills, by creating new Treaſons, by multiplying capital puniſhments, and by deſtroying the fundamental Right of the People to aſſemble peaceably together for the diſcuſſion of public grievances, operate to the ſubverſion of the Conſtitution, and ſtrike at the foundation of the Liberties of Engliſhmen.

Your Petitioners deteſt anarchy, and abhor deſpotiſm! but, as free-born Britons, who value their Liberty as their choiceſt bleſſing, they would be deficient in their duty to their country, to themſelves, and to their poſterity, not to exerciſe their invaluable privilege of petitioning againſt the enaction of laws, by which the fences and ourworks ſet up by our anceſtors to guard that liberty, will be beaten down and deſtroyed. They therefore pray this Honourable Houſe, that the ſaid Bills may not paſs.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the foregoing Petition be approved of; that the Conſtables be deſired to offer it to the abſent Inhabitants for their Signatures; and that Thomas Kemp, Eſq. be inſtructed to preſent it to the Houſe of Commons.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Thomas Kemp, Eſq. for his upright conduct in Parliament, and particularly for his conſtitutional oppoſition to the above-mentioned obnoxious Bills.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Gentlemen who ſigned the Requiſition for convening the ſame; and to Wm. Green, Eſq Henry Manning, Eſq. and John Boys, Eſq. for their attendance and aſſiſtance at this Meeting.

Reſolved, That the proceedings of this Meeting be inſerted in the Telegraph, the Star, the Sun, and in the Lewes Journal.

THOMAS READ, } Conſtables.
HENRY PAWSON, }

The Conſtables having left the Chair, the Thanks of this Meeting were unanimouſly voted them for their impartial conduct.

ST. PAUL COVENT-GARDEN, AND ST. MARTIN'S-LE-GRAND.

AT a General Meeting of the Inhabitants of theſe Pariſhes, held at the Shakeſpeare Tavern, 28th of November, 1795,

JOHN MELVILLE, M. D. in the Chair,

The following Reſolutions being ſeverally put, were unanimouſly agreed to:

I. That this Meeting do conceive that two Bills now depending in Parliament, ſeverally entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Prac-

tices and Attempts;" and "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies;" will, if passed into Laws, extinguish the true, ancient, and indubitable right of the people, and will also be subversive of the Bill of Rights.

II. That this Meeting do most heartily approve and adopt the Petition to the House of Commons against the said two Bills, moved by his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and agreed to at the General Meeting of the Inhabitants of Westminster, held in Palace-yard, on Monday, the 16th inst.

III. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and to the other Members of both Houses of Parliament, who have so nobly and virtuously stood forward at this important crisis in defence of the Rights and Liberties of the People.

IV. That the Thanks of this Meeting be particularly given to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, for the very active and constitutional opposition which he has given to the truly dangerous and alarming principles of the said Bills.

V. That these Resolutions be inserted in the Newspapers, signed by the Chairman.

JOHN MELVILLE, Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair, the Thanks of the Meeting was unanimously given to the Chairman for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

At a General Meeting of the Friendly Association of Merchants, Shipwrights, and the United Shipwrights of his Majesty's Yards, Deptford and Woolwich, held at the St. Helena House, in the Parish of Rotherhithe, in the County of Surry, on Friday, November 27, when Mr. F. W. L, S. Gregory being called to the Chair, the following Resolutions were entered into respecting the two Bills now pending in Parliament.

Resolved,

I. That this Association view with indignation the late Assault committed on the Person of his Majesty by individuals; we do declare our abhorrence of the same, and that the persons thus guilty are worthy of punishment.

II. The the Association declare their firm attachment to the Laws and Constitution of these Realms, as established at the glorious Revolution, which they shall be always ready to protect to the utmost of their power.

III. That the Association view with indignation the attacks of Ministers on the Rights and Liberties of the People, as the insult offered to his Majesty, believing that the two Bills now pending in the Honourable House of Parliament will affect our public meeting on our business, forasmuch as it puts us under the arbitrary power of a (perhaps) corrupt Magistrate.

IV. That the Thanks of this Association be given to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and Norfolk, &c. in the House of Lords, and the Honourable Gentlemen, Messrs. Fox, Sheridan, Grey, Erskine, Whitbread, &c. in the Honourable House of Commons, for their spirited opposition against the present Bills.

V. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Shipwrights, our Brothers at Chatham, for their late spirited conduct on this occasion.

VI. That this Association do Petition the Honourable House of Parliament, that the two present Bills now pending, which strike at the root of British Liberty, may never pass into Law.

VII. That

VII. That these Resolutions be printed in the Public Ledger, Publican's Morning Advertiser, and the Morning Chronicle, that our Countrymen may know our sentiments at this critical moment.

VIII. That the Thanks of this Association be given to the Chairman, for his spirited and impartial conduct.

PARISHES OF ST. MARGARET AND ST. JOHN, WESTMINSTER.

AT a General Meeting of the Inhabitants, convened by public Advertisement, at the Guildhall, in King's-street, 30th November, 1795,

Sir JOSEPH MAWBEY, Bart. in the Chair;

I. It was resolved (three only dissenting) That this Meeting did and do most heartily concur in the Petition agreed to by the General Meeting of the Inhabitants of Westminster, and presented to the House of Commons on Friday last, by their Representative, the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, against the two Bills now depending in Parliament, tending to the utter extinction of their Liberties as a People.

II. Resolved (one dissenting) That the alterations which have been made in the Bill to prevent Seditious Meetings do not remove their original objections to it, since Popular Discussion is still subjected to restraints, not only inconsistent with its freedom, but which render it nugatory; and power is given to Magistrates arbitrarily to demand admission into the private dwellings of individuals, on pretexts which are subversive of that valuable principle in our Constitution, which declares the House of an Englishman to be his Castle.

III. Resolved (one dissenting) That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, for his firm, manly, and Constitutional opposition to the alarming and dangerous tendency of the said Bills.

IV. Resolved, That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman, and inserted in the public Papers.

JOSEPH MAWBEY, Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair, the Thanks of the Meeting was unanimously given to the Chairman for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30.

MR. D. SCOTT presented a Petition from the East India Company, in favour of the two Convention Bills.

MR. JEKYLL expressed his surprise, on hearing the Honourable Gentleman call that Petition the Petition of the East India Company, when, in fact, there had been neither a meeting of that Company, nor had any notice been given of such a measure being in contemplation: there had been a meeting of the Court of Directors of that Company, indeed, as there usually was every week, to manage the pecuniary interests of that numerous and opulent body, and he had heard that they had come to the resolution of presenting

presenting a Petition; but he could not see upon what pretext or presumption it was that they took upon themselves to declare the private opinions of their superiors, the Proprietors, on matters which belonged not to the Court of Directors to intermeddle with. He said, an Honourable Friend of his (Sir F. Baring) had told him, that the Petition of the Directors was not to have been presented before Tuesday, and that he had some observations to offer to the consideration of the House thereupon; but he felt some surprise also at this premature introduction of the Petition, as he had the best grounds to think, that if it had been submitted to a public General Court, which it should have been, both in common propriety, and in order to render its title other than inaccurate, the substance and sense would have been wholly different from what it now appeared.

Mr. D. Scott declared, that if he had called it the Petition of the East India Company, it was entirely by mistake, as he must have known it to be the act of the Court of Directors; for it was subscribed by that body; yet, he would confess, that, on a reconsideration, he might have called it the Petition of the Company, without any violation of propriety, since the Directors, being invested with the executive authority of the Company, had most undoubtedly a right to express the sentiments of their Constituents upon occasions of such great moment as the present; and as to the sanguine opinions of the Hon. Gentleman as to the supposed fate the Petition would have met in a General Court, he had his reasons for thinking that the Petition then presented would have had a large majority.

Mr. Courtenay asked why the Board of Controul had not joined their friends, the Court of Directors, in their Petition? That would have kept the sense of the Company entirely out of dispute!

Mr. Grey presented a Petition from the County of Northumberland. He said, the Meeting at which it was passed was the most numerous ever known in that county, and in point of personal respectability, equal to any that had ever been held. It was well known, the Sheriff of that county had before refused to call a Meeting, but he thought it proper to attend on that occasion, and took the Chair. However, after having opened the Address to his Majesty, upon the late attack made upon his Royal Person, without having ever put the question on that Address, or suffering any other motion, several of which were presented to him by the most respectable characters in the county, he left the Chair, and in that smuggled way carried an Address, which every man in the Meeting would

would have supported and signed. Upon his departure, however, that respectable gentleman, Sir John Swinburne, was called to the Chair, and the Address which he had then the honour to present, expressing the most decided disapprobation and alarm on the subject of the Bills then before the House, was passed unanimously.

Colonel Stanley presented a Petition from the Merchants and Traders of Liverpool in favour of the Bills.

Mr. Blackburne presented a Petition from the Mayor and Corporation of Liverpool in favour of the Bills.

General Tarleton presented a Petition from a great number of the Bankers, Merchants, and Tradesmen of Liverpool against the Bills.

He stated, that the Mayor had refused to call a Public Meeting, and that the Petition, though it lay for signatures a very short period, was most respectably and numerously signed.

Mr. Howard presented a Petition from a number of the Inhabitants of the Town and Neigbourhood of Lymington against the Bills.

Mr. Egerton presented a Petition from the Mayor and Burgesses of Newcastle-Under-Line in favour of the Bills.

Lord Belgrave presented a Petition, in favour of the Bills, from the City of Chester, signed by 2,300 inhabitants.

Mr. Milbank presented a Petition from the City and Neighbourhood of Durham against the Bills.

Lord Hood presented a Petition from the High Steward and Dean of Westminster, and several Burgesses of that City.

Mr. Fox said, he now saw upon what ground the unanimity of the Westminster Petition had been impeached. He confessed, however, that when he said the Inhabitants of Westminster were decidedly against the Bills, he was not sanguine enough to hope for the signature of the Bishop of Rochester.

Mr. Jervoise presented a Petition from Hampshire against the Bills.

Mr. Dundas presented two Petitions, one from the Provost and Magistrates of Glasgow, the other from the Merchants and Manufacturers, in favour of the Bills.

Mr. Fox, in the absence of Sir W. Milner, presented a Petition from York against the Bills, proposed in the most numerous Meeting ever held, and almost unanimously carried.

Mr. Fox presented a Petition from a number of the Inhabitants of Plymouth, Plymouth-Dock, and Stone-house, against the Bills.

Mr. Rose stated, that this Petition did not contain the sense of the people of that place.

Mr.

Mr. W. Smith presented a Petition from the Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of Wrexham, in Denbighshire, against the Bills.

Sir W. W. Wynne said, that the Petition did not express the sense of the people of that place.

All the above Petitions were ordered to lie on the Table.

The Order of the Day, for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of a Bill for the better Security of his Majesty's Person and Government; the question being put, "That the Speaker now leave the Chair,"

Mr. Erskine commenced with observing, that it might appear rather remarkable, that seldom as he attended the House, and seldom as he obtruded himself on their attention, that he should have shewn such zeal and activity in opposing the Bills now pending in Parliament; and more particularly that, on the present occasion, he should have stood up first to oppose the Speaker's leaving the Chair, on a Bill which had for its avowed object the Security of his Majesty's Person, and the Preservation of his Government. He would not degrade himself so far, as to state his feelings on the outrage which had recently been committed against his Majesty's person, because he had a right to presume, that they would be supposed by the world to be such, as must have actuated every humane man upon the occasion. But that no doubt might be entertained of the loyalty of his sentiments, he would declare, that, in his opinion, the safety of the person of the Sovereign was so intimately connected with the safety of the State, that every measure ought to be adopted, which could render the person of the Chief Magistrate more secure. The person who was entrusted with the execution of the law was placed upon a pinnacle, exposed to observation and to envy: to him was committed the exercise of the most obnoxious functions of public justice, and on him the odium of unpopular measures was indiscriminately affixed. Whatever security, therefore, it was possible to give to the person of the Monarch, it was wise and politic to confer; but the Bill now under consideration, while it diminished the security of the subject, gave no additional security to the person of the Sovereign. On the contrary, he scrupled not to assert, that it tended to bring both the safety of his person and the authority of his Government into new and alarming perils. He took it for granted, that none would be disposed to dispute the truth of the political axiom, that that Government is the best, which confers the greatest security with the fewest restraints, and that it is unwise to multiply penalties without the most cogent reasons for the multiplication. There was also another axiom, which,

which, he presumed, would command an universal assent, that it was always improper to repeal ancient law, till it be found, by experience and practice, to be inadequate to the purposes for which it was instituted. To prove the insufficiency of a law, it was not enough to say, that a new conjuncture had arisen, which required new legal restrictions, without, in the first place, proving, that the existing laws were inadequate to meet the emergency of this conjuncture, and that the law proposed to be instituted was calculated to remedy the deficiency of the present statutes, and to answer the whole of the purpose for which it was enacted.

The great principles upon which our forefathers acted in planning the system of their jurisprudence were, always to couch their statutes in terms so precise, that it was not easy to pervert their meaning; and never to make the law more severe than was necessary, in order to answer the purpose for which it was instituted. In the statute of Edward the Third, so distinguished by its majestic simplicity, and so remarkable for its brevity, that it was scarcely possible for any person who had read it, not to remember it, these principles were most conspicuously displayed. That statute embraced two objects of civil jurisprudence, the safety of the person of the Monarch, and the stability of the Government. Before that law was passed, which, even from the period of its enactment, experience has evinced to be adequate to all the purposes of its institution, the country was in that deplorable situation to which it seemed to be the object of the present Bill to reduce it. Then every breach of allegiance, however trifling, involved a capital offence, and the misguided enthusiast was confounded with the malignant traitor. The statute of Edward the Third, in the words of Chief Justice Hale, was enacted as a remedial law, to remove former oppressions, and to secure the administration of pure and impartial justice. By that statute, to compass or imagine the death of the King was stated to be high treason; and for his own part, he could not conceive how any law, however minute in its provisions, could possibly provide more strongly for the safety of the King; how it was possible for any enactments, however severe, to plant a hedge by which the person of the Sovereign could be more securely defended than by the words of that statute. Perhaps it might be said by some, that the words "compass and imagine" were vague and undefined; but he would assert, it was impossible to invent terms of more clear and appropriate signification. They were the terms in which the common law of felony, respecting the murder of individuals, was couched. And as Justice Foster had observed, the language was transferred from the law of felony to

the

the law of treaſon, after it was found that the ſtatute of felony was too ſevere; and that which had been in former caſes murder, as affecting the individual, was made treaſon, as affecting the Sovereign. The ſecond part of the ſtatute of Edward the Third declared levying war againſt the King, or granting comfort and protection to his enemies, to be high treaſon. But why did not our anceſtors make the compaſſing to levy war high treaſon? The reaſon was, that in the benevolence of the principles by which they were actuated, they never overſtepped the neceſſity of the occaſion. They knew that it was in the power of any malignant ruffian to attack the perſon of the King, and to endanger his ſafety, and therefore, in their ſtátute, they made the very imagination of his death to be high treaſon. They did not wait for the execution of the deed, they ſtruck at the intention itſelf, as ſoon at leaſt as it was diſcovered by any overt act. But theyheld out a conſpiracy to levy war againſt the King as only a miſdemeanor, becauſe it was a thouſand to one that the conſpiracy was too contemptible for notice; that it would be diſcovered before it was ripe for execution; or from the oppoſition which it would have to encounter, that there would be little miſchief to be apprehended from its taking effect.—

He did not deny, that the firſt act of levying war was an act of high treaſon; all he contended was, and he was juſtified by the maxims and the practice of our juriſprudence in aſſerting it, that merely a conſpiracy to levy war never was accounted high treaſon. Our anceſtors recollected alſo, in framing the ſtatute, that the firſt motion of a conſpiracy againſt the life of a Sovereign might be fatal to his ſafety, and therefore they conſtituted even the conſpiracy into an overt act of high treaſon. Whereas, a conſpiracy to levy war againſt his regal capacity, requiring greater force to give it effect than the individuals concerned in it might be able to command, protected as the Throne was by a powerful military guard, they determined that it ſhould not be conſidered as high treaſon till open violence was reſorted to, and the operations of the rebellion had actually commenced. The crime of conſpiracy was ſeated in the mind, and it was only from overt acts that a criminal intention, either againſt the Perſon or Government of the King, could be ſhewn to exiſt; but an overt act of conſpiracy againſt the perſonal life of the King was high treaſon; whereas an overt act of conſpiracy againſt the regal capacity of the Sovereign was not high treaſon according to the exiſting ſtatute. The province of the Judges, in acting upon this ſtatute, has always been to determine whether there was any overt act which in its nature conſtituted high treaſon, and after determining this, they left it to the jury to decide

cide whether the overt acts were proven, and whether, after they were proven, guilt was brought home to the perſons accuſed. The judges determined from the face of the indictment, upon the nature of the offence, and left the ſequel to the jury, namely, the proof, the facts, and the guilt of the priſoners, as they could be aſcertained from the overt acts. Overt acts in themſelves did not conſtitute ſubſtantive treaſon; for, he would contend, that all the overt acts charged in a treaſonable indictment might be proved, and yet that the jury might find themſelves obliged, in juſtice, to bring in their verdict not guilty. And in this aſſertion he was juſtified by many deciſions in caſes of high treaſon. Even in caſes of conſpiracy, however, to levy war, if the conſpiracy involves an immediate deſign of laying violent hands upon the perſon of the Sovereign, ſuch a conſpiracy certainly was an overt act of high treaſon, and was provided for in the firſt clauſe of the ſtatute of Edward the Third. Thus, in the caſe of Sir John Friend, who was tried for high treaſon, his objection, founded upon a certain conſtruction of that ſtatute, was very incorrect; whereas the opinion of Chief Juſtice Holt, who preſided on his trial, was perfectly conformable to the law. The overt act charged in his indictment was the raiſing of troops in France, to aid the cauſe of the Pretender.—Sir John Friend interpoſed an objection, which was over-ruled by the Court, and Dr. Goldſmith in conſequence has taken occaſion to ſay, that Friend made an excellent defence, but that Juſtice Holt was prejudiced. Mr. Erſkine denied the aſſertion, and he did it upon this ground: Sir John Friend ſaid that the troops were raiſed at his inſtance, and that the purpoſe for which they were raiſed was to levy war againſt the King; but reſting his cauſe upon the intention not having been carried into effect, he contended, that he was innocent of the charge of high treaſon. To this the Chief Juſtice moſt properly replied, that in ordinary caſes, a conſpiracy to levy war certainly was not an overt act of high treaſon, but as the immediate object of this conſpiracy was to lay violent hands upon the perſon of the King, it came under the firſt clauſe of the ſtatute of Edward the Third, and to all intents and purpoſes conſtituted an overt act of treaſon. Sir John Friend's objection could not bear him out; for the conſpiracy in which he was engaged, as affecting the perſonal ſafety of the Monarch, though not high treaſon in itſelf, was certainly an overt act of treaſon, except he could juſtify the innocence of his intention, for it was impoſſible to find more powerful evidence of treaſonable intent, than a purpoſe to levy a rebellious war, with an immediate deſign upon the perſon of the King. But did Lord Chief Juſtice Holt ſtate the

conſpiracy as a ſubſtantive treaſon? No. It was impoſſible for him or any man to arraign the lurking intentions of the mind, and therefore, like an honeſt man and a ſound lawyer, he only ſtated the facts as evidence of the deſign, and left the jury to decide whether the overt acts, which were proved, were proofs of guilt in the perſon accuſed? This being the caſe, how was he ſurpriſed to hear that the preſent Bill made no alteration in the law of treaſon! It at leaſt made this alteration, that inſtead of a plain ancient ſtatute of which there certainly had been many conſtructions, but the conſtructions of which were all embodied into a regular line of precedents, that were well underſtood by every perſon who pretended to be at all verſed in the law, a new ſtatute was to be formed, and new precedents were about to be eſtabliſhed. The text on which all the judicial conſtructions ſtood was to be cut down, and their tendency evaded, while they would be obliged anew to wander through all the ambiguities and uncertainties of the law. He aſked, what in the name of God they meant by ſuch a proceeding? By the law of England, a conſpiracy to levy war againſt the life of the Sovereign was an overt act of high treaſon. Any conſpiracy to levy war againſt the Government was deemed high treaſon; and ſo far did the proviſions of the Bill extend, that even a conſpiracy to pull down all the bawdy-houſes of the kingdom conſign the conſpirators to the puniſhment of traitors. He aſked the framers of the Bill, if they had not embodied all the falſe conſtructions of the ſtatute of Edward the Third, on purpoſe to make them a ſtanding law; and if even an attempt to pull down a few turnpike gates might not ſubject a man to the penalties of high treaſon? But not even an attempt was neceſſary, a conſpiracy was all that was required; and a letter intimating ſuch a deſign would have all the effect with reſpect to the puniſhment of the writer which the purpoſe could have, after it was carried into execution. He aſked theſe Gentlemen if there was any thing, which rendered the regal capacity leſs ſecure now than at any former period? Was there any deficiency of loyalty in the ſtate, or was there any deficiency of military force to quell thoſe diſcontents which neceſſarily aroſe even in the beſt regulated Governments? Was it conſonant with juſtice to impoſe oppreſſive laws upon the nation, becauſe a ſolitary individual, in the malignity of his heart, or in the infatuation of enthuſiaſm, had committed a deſperate outrage? Or, was it conſiſtent with ſound policy, to wean the love of the people from the perſon of the monarch by arbitrary ſtatutes, when every man ought to uſe his utmoſt efforts to concenter their affections around the throne? It was ſaid, that on the day on

which his Majesty was coming down to Parliament, to perform the most sacred function of his regal office, he had been insulted by a crowd, and that in this crowd a miscreant wretch had been found, who had the dark malignity of heart to assault the coach of the King, and to bring his sacred person into danger. Good God! exclaimed Mr. Erskine, is there no law in existence to punish such a wretch? Is it not a libel upon the honesty of an English Jury, even to suppose that they would hesitate to pronounce him guilty of treason, if his person could be identified, and the fact could be proved? Were all the liberties of the subject to be cut down, and all the venerable system of English jurisprudence to be overthrown, because a villain had been daring enough to commit a crime which the existing laws were fully adequate to punish? If an individual of the crowd which accompanied his Majesty on the first day of the Session down to the House, was wicked and desperate enough to throw a stone, or some substance against the window of the coach, and could be proved to have thrown the substance, it would no doubt rest with the jury to decide upon his intention, which he certainly could not justify by any other plea but that of insanity—and this supposition apart, they could not fail to bring him in guilty of treason. Nay, he would even go farther, and ask of the Attorney General, if he knew of any one instance in which reasonable guilt was clearly brought home to the accused, in which he was acquitted from a deficiency in the law? On the late memorable trials, no overt act had been alledged, as immediately aiming at the death of the Sovereign; and even then, much as he differed on the point of law from some explanations which were given of it from high authority, the judges never had contended, that a conspiracy, or any thing less than an overt act aimed at the life of the Sovereign, could constitute high treason; and even after overt acts were proved, they left it entirely to the jury to judge of the intention of their authors.

What then could tempt them to frame a Bill comprehending an immense variety of new treasons, and even constituting writing into an overt act of treason, for this he understood to be the purport of the clause in which writing or other overt act was mentioned? Why did they use these dark and ambiguous expressions? Why did not they use the good old phrase of our ancestors *as proveably attainted.* Or if they were determined to create new substantive treasons, why not permit the subject to be tried upon these treasons upon fair and legal evidence, without introducing terms of which it was impossible to divine the meaning, or which, if they had any meaning, contained an insult on the understandings and the feelings of Englishmen? Mr. Erskine next

adverted

adverted to the clause in the preamble of the Bill, "We, therefore, calling to mind the good and wholesome provisions which have at different times been made by the wisdom of Parliament," &c. He called upon the House to consider the times in which these wholesome provisions originated, and the effects which they produced. The statute of Edward the Third was repealed in the reign of Richard the Second, and in consequence of the good and wholesome provisions by which it was supplanted, he was deposed and murdered. In an act passed in the reign of Henry the Fourth, these laws, to which Richard the Second had resorted, were reprobated as incompatible with the safety of the people. And those detestable poisons which had sprung up in those times, and which were all cut down with one blow in the days of Henry, the present Ministers were about to cultivate anew, not without reviling and insulting the statute by which they were destroyed. Mr. Erskine said, he had no right to ask an audience of his Majesty, but he declared, that he felt a strong inclination to rush into the closet of his Sovereign, forgetful of the usual forms of decorum, and to implore him upon his knees to withhold his assent from a Bill, which went to destroy his Throne in the hearts of his subjects, and to invest him with the insignia of a tyrant. Before the days of Edward III. the people lay in a great measure at the mercy of the Sovereign. The statute relative to high treason passed in that reign secured to them personal safety. The weeds which had before choaked the rights of the People, sprang up again; but they were mowed down at one stroke by Henry the Fourth. They shot forth a third time; and even in the first year of the reign of Queen Mary, whose bloody persecutions were sufficient to induce the mind to turn with horror from her history, an act was passed to relieve the subject from the oppression of treason laws. He desired that they would reflect on this act, not only as a monument of wisdom, but as a step which was found to be necessary in a reign, which, of all that was recorded in history, was marked with bloodshed and barbarity; to reflect that the measures at which it struck were never renewed, even where the Stuarts, with a numerous tribe of adherents, were damning the present family on the Throne; that they were never renewed during all the assassination plots of King William, and that they were not even renewed during the actual rebellions in the reigns of George the First and Second. Then every Englishman felt proud in living under the mild and auspicious influence of English laws; but it was become part of the politics of modern times to recur to measures which disgraced the worst periods of our history.

He aſked if it was really fit and proper to borrow from the policy of Charles the Second, or to imitate the meaſures of ſuch a reign? Let us, ſaid Mr. Erſkine, for a little, compare the periods: Charles the Second was recalled to the Throne after Charles the Firſt had been murdered, after Monarchy had been for a conſiderable time entirely annihilated, and when great numbers of his ſubjects were liable to ſentence of death for high treaſon. What did he do on his firſt aſcending the Throne? Why he paſſed an act of oblivion of all the treaſons which had been committed againſt his father, and granted pardons to thoſe who had incurred the ſentence of the law. At that very time, the act, from which this was almoſt literally copied, was poured into his boſom as a grateful effuſion for his compaſſion, and in the firſt tranſport of zeal for the firm eſtabliſhment of Monarchy, while the wounds which the uſurpation of Cromwell had inflicted were ſcarcely healed. Previous to the reſtoration of Charles the Second, when no law againſt treaſon was in force, except the ſtatute of Edward the Third, Judge Hales moved in the Houſe of Commons, that the conceſſions of Charles the Firſt, at the treaty of Nieuport, ſhould be laid before them as a kind of Bill of Rights for the ſubject, but they would not even hear him. Tired of Cromwell's oppreſſion, and eager for the return of Monarchy, they let their zeal outrun their judgment, and allowed their loyalty to compromiſe with their ſafety. But what was the conſequence? The act which was paſſed, and of which this was a copy, was followed up by a number of proſecutions, which brought on a revolution, which exterminated the whole race of Kings then upon the Throne. But what effect had that law in ſecuring the ſafety of Charles? Then (ſaid Mr. Erſkine) there were falſe plots and conſpiracies, as there are now. Then a ſyſtem of alarm was propagated, as it is at this day. Then fulſome addreſſes were preſented to the King, not unlike thoſe which we now ſee ſwarming around the Throne. One plot, indeed, was real in King Charles's time (which was one more than had appeared in the reign of George the Third), that of Ryehouſe. But how did the Sovereign eſcape from the machinations of the conſpirators who had a deſign againſt his life? How was his perſon defended from the hand of violence? Did that piece of paper ſave him? No. He was ſaved by his houſe at Newmarket taking fire on the Wedneſday, whereas his aſſaſſins were not ready to ſhoot him till the Friday.

The object of the preſent Bill might be divided into two parts: To defend his Majeſty againſt rebels and aſſaſſins; and in both theſe views Mr. Erſkine conſidered it as equally uſeleſs and inſuffi-

 cient,

cient. There was no need to fecure the Sovereign againft rebellious attempts, for no fymptoms of general diffatisfaction in the country had ever appeared; and from the efforts of a few difcontented individuals what danger was to be apprehended? Affaffins might be divided into three claffes,—thofe who act under the influence of malignant difpofitions; thofe who are difordered in their minds; and thofe who are impelled by the enthufiaftic frenzy of politics, or are employed as the inftruments of others. From the firft clafs the perfonal virtues of his Majefty afforded him the beft and the fafeft protection. He had wronged no man; he had never fwayed the fceptre of a tyrant, nor ruled with a rod of oppreffion. From the fecond clafs it was impoffible for any penal enactments to protect him, as they were not proper objects of punifhment. And from the third, it was impoffible for this or any other law to guard him. What law would have reftrained a Ravaillac or an Ankerftroem from executing their foul and malignant defign? The affaffin muft either be detected or efcape undetected. If he is not detected, what law, however fevere, can reach a man who is unknown? If he is detected, who would tell him that his life was protected by the prefent laws? After the knife had been pointed at the breaft of the Sovereign, who would pretend to fay that the attempt had been made merely to make trial of the affections of the people? Good God! exclaimed Mr. Erfkine, I cannot believe that his Majefty, convinced as he muft neceffarily be of the loyalty and attachment of his people, will ever give his approbation to a law, which, under the pretext of providing for his fafety, contains a grofs and unfounded libel upon the character of his fubjects. When it pleafed God to remove from the Sovereign the hand of affliction, what demonftrations of loyalty and affection appeared in the metropolis, as his Majefty paffed to St. Paul's, to give thanks to Heaven for his deliverance. One would have thought that it was one great family rejoicing at the recovery of their common father. And notwithftanding all this tumult of congratulatory joy; notwithftanding that bouquet of affection, on which it is the fortune of the prefent Monarch daily to regale; his Minifters would infpire him with jealoufy and diftruft. An alarm is founded throughout the kingdom, and fpies and informers echo back the cry. The next expreffion in the Bill to which Mr. Erfkine adverted, was the claufe in which to "exprefs, publifh, utter or declare, any word, fentence, or other thing or things, to incite or ftir up the people," &c. is called a mifdemeanor. From whence the framers of the Bill had borrowed this provifion, he could not conceive. After this a figh or a groan might be conftrued into treafon. He had in vain fearched for it in

the

the hiftory of former tyrants, and could only fuppofe it to have been fuggefted by the defcription of the poet :—

In the vaulted roof
The tyrant fat, and thro' a fecret channel
Collected every found; heard each complaint
Of martyr'd virtue; kept a regifter
Of fighs and groans by cruelty extorted;
Noted the honeft language of the heart;
Then on the victims wreak'd his murd'rous rage,
For yielding to the feelings of their nature!

What followed fhocked him ftill more, infomuch, that he fhuddered to read it. From what quiver the arrow came, he neither knew, nor defired to know.—That the fecond offence fhould be punifhed with tranfportation.—Good God! that the law of Scotland fhould be tranflated into the code of Englifh jurifprudence, at a certain conjuncture, becaufe the people of Scotland had thought fit to live under them in any conjuncture. Every crime ought to have an appropriate punifhment meafured by the moral turpitude of the crime, and not by the circumftances attending the commiffion. A robbery on the highway was equally criminal, whether the fum taken was one pound or a thoufand. A burglary was equally immoral, whether there were goods carried off to a great or a fmall amount. And why fhould a mifdemeanor be made to differ from itfelf; and why leave to the Magiftrate a difcretionary power, which never ought, and never can with propriety exift along with an equal and impartial diftribution of juftice. This difcretionary power was not vefted folely in the Chief Magiftrate; according to the prefent Bill it would be the prerogative of every Court of Terminer throughout the kingdom to tranfport a man for feven years, whether juftly or unjuftly, who had happened on a former occafion to have been convicted of a libel. He faid, that according to the law of libel, as lately amended and explained, the jury were judges of what was a libel, as well as of the intention of the author. This doctrine, however, might foon be fuperfeded by the operation of the prefent Bill, which might limit and control the eftablifhed privileges of the jury, and deprive the people of that laft barrier by which their liberties were defended. He would put an inftance; fuppofe a bookfeller publifhes a pamphlet which fhall be found to be a libel, though perhaps he never read a page of it, and was afleep when it was publifhed, yet this man might be exiled from his country by any magiftrate who might think fit to exercife with feverity the difcretion vefted in him by the laws. He did not mean to reflect upon the general character of the magiftrates of this country; but he contended that the Government of England was a

Government of jealoufy, and that it was the duty of every branch of the Conftitution to watch the motions of the reft. At prefent, however, there feemed to be a difpofition to throw the balance of power into the hands of the Crown, and commit the rights of juftice to the difcretionary exercife of his Majefty's Minifters. He trufted, however, that the people of this country retained enough of the fpirit of their anceftors, to fpurn fuch an impudent invafion of their privileges, not by open rebellion and forcible refiftance, but by their united voice, raifed in fuch a firm and decided tone as to awe and terrify his Majefty's Minifters into a defertion of their wild, extravagant, and oppreffive meafures. If the provifions of the bill were to take effect, they would oblige the people to fly from their own fpecies; they would render them unfafe in their beds; convert their tables into fcenes of jealoufy and diftruft; and totally extinguifh all the private intercoufe of life. Upon the whole, Mr. Erfkine concluded, that the ftatute of Edward the Third was fufficient to punifh every attempt upon the life of the Sovereign, and that the annals of Britain could not furnifh an occafion on which it had not been adequate to all the purpofes of a treafon law. On the other hand, he concluded, that the prefent Bill went to create new and unneceffary treafons, to diforganize the fyftem of our civil jurifprudence, to alter and render oppreffive the prefent libel law, and, by fanctioning grievous and vexatious meafures, to excite difaffection, and to engender difcord. He would therefore oppofe the Speaker's leaving the chair, and the farther progrefs of a Bill, which he deemed of fuch dangerous tendency.

The Attorney General faid, he rofe to make fome obfervations on the fpeech he had juft heard from his Honourable and Learned Friend—a fpeech which, with the greateft refpect for the talents, and the utmoft perfuafion of the purity of intention of his Learned Friend, feemed to him to be an extraordinary one, and by no means in point to the motion before the Houfe. He accufed his learned friend of blending fome arguments which related chiefly to the Bill which had been difcuffed upon a former evening, with his reafoning upon that Bill which was now more particularly under their confideration. It was undoubtedly the duty of every man to declare his opinion upon a public queftion of importance; but as to the prefent Bill, in its prefent ftage, he could fee no fatisfactory reafon for oppofing it. The queftion for the confideration of the Houfe was, not whether there was any ambiguity in the provifions of the Bill—not whether there was too great feverity in its penalties—not whether it was a mere explanation of the Act of the 25th of Edward, or introduced laws of a new defcription—not whether the Bill was fit to be received by the Houfe; but the queftion was,

whether,

whether, after having undergone two readings, the Houſe ſhould again recur to the ground they had before gone over, and conſider whether the principle of the Bill would bear it out—or whether, by meliorating the proviſions of it, or adopting them as they ſtood, they ſhould beſt render it effective to its end. He contended that this Bill did not go beyond the ſtatute of the 25th of Edward the Third; he had never known one meaſure more eſſential ſince the formation of that ſtatute than the preſent, inaſmuch as it more clearly defined and explained the purport, meaning, and intent of that ſtatute, while it moſt ſtrictly followed the letter and ſpirit of it. He had paid a general attention to the Petitions which had been laid upon the table againſt the Bills, and, from the declarations of his Learned Friend, he underſtood, that he followed the general propoſitions laid down in thoſe Petitions, that the law of treaſon was not only perfectly adequate to the prevention and puniſhment of the crime of treaſon, but that, under the plain letter of the law as it now ſtood, was ſo explicit and intelligible as to admit no miſconſtruction. Here he differed with him; becauſe, if the law of treaſon, according to the 25th of Edward the Third, be ſo clear, explicit, and intelligible, what occaſion was there for the Learned Gentleman in the year 1795 to deſire the Houſe to look to all the judicial expoſitions upon it? He agreed with him, that all judicial expoſitions of the law were not to be looked at but with jealouſy, particularly thoſe upon the law of treaſon; becauſe every queſtion of treaſon affected the life of an individual: but he obſerved alſo, the ſtatute of the 25th of Edward the Third had provided, that in all queſtions of doubt and uncertainty, an appeal ſhould be made to Parliament for a more definite and ſatisfactory expoſition; and it was upon this principle that the preſent Bill was introduced. According to the declaration of his Learned Friend, the ſtatute of the 25th of Edward the Third was ſo plain, that thoſe who ran might read, and thoſe who read underſtand it; but when he recollected how many conſtructions had been put upon that ſtatute, how many deciſions had been given as to the paſſage upon levying war, and when he remembered all the diſtinctions of actual and conſtructive war, he could not coincide in this opinion. He, therefore, thought it a wiſe, a prudent, and neceſſary act of the Legiſlature, to paſs a law, like the preſent, upon that ſtatute, inaſmuch as it muſt tend to the benefit of the common weal, and to the ſafety of the ſubject, to render that law leſs ambiguous. He repeated, that Parliament had been referred to in all ages, not only for the enactment of new laws, but for the expoſition of old ones, and that the law of treaſons required ſuch an expoſition; for, as Lord Hale had ſaid in his judi-

cial expoſition of treaſon—" Let no man ſuppoſe that theſe treaſons are not included in the ſtatute of Edward the Third." So it was neceſſary that Parliament ſhould more diſtinctly and immediately deſcribe what was, and what was not treaſon, by giving notice that that ſtatute would attach to ſuch and ſuch crimes; and upon the ſame principle did Lord Hale ſay, in his obſervations upon the ſtatute of Richard the Second, that the imagination of the depoſition of the King was included in the language of Edward the Third. In doing this, no man could heſitate to adopt the language of the preamble of the firſt of Queen Mary, if any ſimilarity in the circumſtances could warrant it. But if it was ſhewn, that this went no farther than the proviſions of the 25th of Edward the Third, did it follow, that the preamble of this Act ſhould adopt the ſame ſentiments as that of Queen Mary? His Honourable and Learned Friend had endeavoured to ſhew, that an act of hoſtility, ſuch as levying war againſt the King, if not coupled with an intention to compaſs his death, was not treaſon. He, for his part, thought otherwiſe. If then it was doubtful what interpretation might ariſe upon the law, it was fit that, by the interpoſition and act of the Legiſlature, that point ſhould be put at reſt. With all due reſpect, however, for the opinion of his Learned Friend (and no one could value it more highly than he did), he would affirm it as his opinion, that in ſtrict ſenſe and interpretation of law, he who compaſſed the depoſition of the King, compaſſed his death, and was to all intents and purpoſes guilty of high treaſon: and, he would hazard an aſſertion, that all the legal and judicial authorities were in favour of that poſition. While a ſhadow of doubt, however, remained to obſcure the ſubject, the Parliament ſhould remove it, and tell, in explicit and unequivocal terms, what the law really was. He admitted, that in ordinary caſes it might happen (as ſtated by his Learned Friend), that a perſon might form an intention to maim, wound, or impriſon, and yet not mean to take away the life of the object; but ſuch caſes as the preſent were governed by a different principle; and the laws diſtinctly ſtated, that if any perſon meant to do an act, which, in its ordinary and natural conſequences, might bring about the death of the King, that perſon was guilty of compaſſing the King's death: this was laid down by Hale, and all the great Crown Lawyers. In the caſe of Sir John Friend, Treby ſays, (for he was ſitting by Lord Chief Juſtice Holt at the time) that the Lord Chief Juſtice informed the Jury, if they had no evidence that the defendant compaſſed or imagined the King's death, but confined his intentions ſolely to the depoſition, he came within the penalty of the ſtatute, and was guilty of high treaſon. The Attorney General

confeſſed

confessed himself exactly of the same opinion; for, although Sir John Friend had previously so arranged matters, that King William should have been merely dispossessed of the throne of this realm, and have been suffered to escape unhurt to Holland, yet, he would say, distinctly this was treason. The Attorney General farther supported his opinion by the cases of Hardwicke and Lord Lovat, and then urged, that the single question for the House would be, to inform the people what the law of treason was, and if it be found that the law was either inexplicit or deficient, then the single question for the House would be, to enact such a law as might answer the occasion. He then adverted once more to the state trials, a subject he did not wish to introduce into that House any oftener than circumstances rendered absolutely necessary. Though a traitorous conspiracy was not proved at those trials, he said, a design to traduce and subvert the Constitution and Government of the country was made manifest by meetings which had never before existed, and by the publication of libels to which this country had been a stranger. This design was fully made out to his mind; and if such was his genuine impression, he thought it not only his duty to state it to the House, but to submit such provisions as should appear necessary against the repetition of such offences, and to support them with his best ability. If the House differed with him in this idea, it was at liberty to act as it pleased; but if ever the time came, when their habitations should be tumbling down upon them, and they should blame themselves for having been too supine, he desired them to remember that no blame could rest with him, and that he had at least told them of their danger. He reminded all men of property, amongst whom he did not exclusively class men of wealth, estates, and splendid possessions, but all those who thought that the liberty of Britons was their most valuable property, that a Revolution never could enrich the poorer classes, but would make the country poor indeed. Upon these grounds he felt the obligation to introduce the present law. He proceeded in his observations, by commenting on the peculiar care which the laws of treason, according to the judicial expositions, took of the person of the King; and stated, in the words of an Honourable Friend, that the late proceedings, which justified these measures, were not English, but French treason; and adduced another argument in favour of his declaration, from the commitment of Frith, the maniac, by the late Lord Chancellor, as guilty of high treason, not because Lord Thurlow could imagine that a small pebble was likely to kill the King, but because it was marked by circumstances of peril which at first indicated a treasonable intention. On the supposition, however, that this was not the law of the

country,

country, and, independent of any connection with the societies, he asked whether there was ever an instance of a similar attack upon the Sovereign as that which was made the first day of the Session; or, whether there was ever an act which more earnestly called upon Parliament to explain the law of treason, or propose some new provisions? As to the objection made by his Honourable and Learned Friend to the wording of the provision, he would only remark, in vindication of it, that the words were the same used in every indictment for high treason. This his Learned Friend certainly knew, and, he dared to say, had candour enough to acknowledge. But supposing the words were objectionable, was that a reason for not going into the Committee, where they might be altered? He confessed that, in his opinion, the Bill might be made more analogous to the law, and more efficient to the objects and purposes it had in view; but it was in a Committee alone that could be done. The opposition of his Honourable Friend, therefore, seemed to him to be peculiarly ill-timed and improper. In the Committee, too, the Bill might be rendered more precisely explanatory of the overt acts, and receive such alterations as might take away all cause for jealousy; for he agreed it was desirable that no jealousy should be left, if possible, on such a subject. His Learned Friend had spoken much of the severity of the punishment of certain misdemeanors; but he would remind the House, that at former times misdemeanors were held highly punishable. A great person, (Lord Thurlow) whom he was bound to revere, and whose protection of him demanded, and should ever have his gratitude and esteem, had, when Attorney General, prosecuted a person for a libel, (Mr. Horne Tooke, we believe) and moved the Court that he should be pilloried, though the libel upon record was not like the modern publications, a libel on the Government and Constitution of the country, and degrading to the most sacred and honourable characters, but merely a libel concerning the administration of the kingdom. Now with respect to the first offence under this statute, he observed a misdemeanor was liable to be punished by common Law. By the present Bill, the nature of the crime was not altered, though the mode of conviction was, and that in a way favourable to the offender. For whereas, in other cases one witness was sufficient to convict, by this Bill the concurrence of two witnesses was necessary: and, on a wilful and malicious repetition after conviction, was it not reasonable to restrain and mark the offence by a more signal penalty? He then entered into general arguments in favour of the Bill, remarking that about the latter end of the year 1791, a system of opinions, and of action perfectly novel, was introduced in this country.—

Meetings

Meetings were formed upon a new principle of aſſociation, in which, as his Learned Friend, Mr. Grant, had obſerved the other evening, in a ſpeech that would be remembered ſo long as the deliberations of that Houſe were ever remembered, the machinations of a few individuals, leagued together like thoſe who produced the French Revolution, circulated libels which in their nature and extent required ſome reſtriction. The Government of this and every other country, he continued, was founded on opinion; and who was there in that Houſe who did not remember about ten years ago, that the Conſtitution was conſidered as the ſource of all our bleſſings, the ſecurity of all private happineſs, and the foundation of all public reſpect, the pride and boaſt of the natives, the envy and admiration of foreigners, and the fineſt model of practical liberty? Theſe ſocieties had ſet out with the doctrine, that the will of the majority was paramount to all other rights; but when upon putting it to the teſt, the enemies of the Conſtitution found that the will of the majority was in its favour, it became neceſſary to their views to write down every thing that was valuable. This was done, not in abſtract publications—not by fair diſcuſſion--not in the common and cuſtomary modes and channels of conveyance; but in the moſt wicked libels upon Government, and upon every perſon eminent for talents and virtue--ſcattered by ſocieties through the country, in numbers beyond calculation, and in ſuch editions as enabled them to deal out, at the cheapeſt rate, their infernal poiſon; ſhewing that the Government was an impoſition; that the King, inſtead of doing no wrong, could do no good; that hereditary Government was an uſurpation; and that the Conſtitution was a ſcandalous compact between the King and the ariſtocracy to rob the people.—Thus the Government was to be written down, and that in the very way practiſed with ſo much ſucceſs in France. He ſaid the Conſtitution looked at man as that imperfect being Nature made him; and while it cloathed the kingly office in gifts more than human, ſuch as perpetuity, infallibility, ubiquity, and perfection, it gave the King the common allotment of humanity, and reſtrained the exerciſe of his power with Commiſſioners, who were to be reſponſible for his actions; and by the checks of the two other branches of the Legiſlature: yet this wiſe and ſalutary principle of the Conſtitution was perverted, and the ideal attributes given by it to the kingly office, repreſented as if applied to his mere phyſical qualities, in order to bring both King and Conſtitution into contempt. Gentlemen would aſk why thoſe libels were not proſecuted? To this he would anſwer, becauſe they were numerous, ſo intricate, and ſo dexterous, that no individual proſecution was ſufficient to anſwer the wholeſome

purpoſes

purpofes to be derived from fuch a proceeding. Let Gentlemen only walk down the Strand, and in fhops of the moft public refort, fee what innumerable Seditious Pamphlets were openly held out for fale. Was he to profecute all thofe Books ?—Could he do it ?—Was it poffible ?--The Houfe fhould remember, that in the laft two years there were more profecutions for libels than in any twenty years before--The firft libel he would fuppofe punifhed with three years imprifonment; the fecond libel of the fame perfon would add two more years--that would make five--taking it this way, if every libel was punifhed, there were many men whofe lives, if protracted to the greateft extent of human longevity, would not fee the end of their punifhments. If from this defect of the laws, the Sovereign was to be libelled and degraded with impunity, the mifchief would foon rife to that excefs, that the Houfe would wifh, when too late, that they had applied a timely remedy to the evil. He faid, he had now told the Houfe what he thought were the objects of the Societies, and he afked a Right Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Fox, why he avoided delivering his opinion upon the objects of the Societies when called to do fo by his Learned Friend, Mr. Grant, efpecially when he had faid that they were lefs dangerous than before. He concluded by afferting, that much as he lamented the occafion, fince fimilar laws had been enacted in the reigns of Charles II. King William, and Queen Anne, fince the object of the Societies was to degrade and deftroy every principle of virtue, all natural religion and political order, and fince it was an eftablifhed maxim, *falus populi fuprema lex*, he fhould vote for the Bill with corrections in the Committee, and he fhould now vote for it to go into the Committee under the perfuafion, that there was a neceffity for it, which might be fully acted on, without touching any one right or liberty of the people.

Mr. Fox faid, that it appeared to him fomething fingular, and not very aufpicious as to the correctnefs of the ftatements of the Learned Gentleman, that he had begun his fpeech with uttering complaints againft his Honourable Friend (Mr. Erfkine) with refpect to blending the two Bills in argument on the prefent occafion. Though his Honourable Friend had fpoken at confiderable length, and with an effect which he trufted would not eafily be forgotten, and though the two Bills, in their component parts, might be traced to the fame principle, and confidered as the refult of a connected attempt on the liberties of the country, he called upon the Houfe to recollect that his Honourable Friend had fpoken moft diftinctly to the Bill now before the Houfe. From this commencement he had augured that the Honourable Gentleman would not debate with

great candour, or ſtick very correctly to the immediate object of conſideration, and in this expectation he had not been diſappointed. They were now debating the principle of the Bill. And if the Bill appeared fraught with proviſions, ſome of which the Learned Gentleman himſelf was obliged to ſtate that he could not approve, though he did not think proper to treat them with that aſperity which, in his opinion, they deſerved; he thought that the Houſe would do well to reject the Bill altogether, and adopt ſome other meaſure better calculated to anſwer the purpoſe in view. Mr. Fox adverted to the preamble of the Bill. Though he was pretty well acquainted with the contents of the Bill, and ſhould have ſuppoſed himſelf capable to underſtand any reference that might be made to them in the courſe of debate; yet he owned there were ſome paſſages in the ſpeech of the Learned Gentleman, with reſpect to which he was entirely at a loſs, as applied to the preamble of that Bill. If a perſon had come in during the ſpeech of the Learned Gentleman, without knowing what was the ſubject, he might have ſuppoſed that they were diſcuſſing a declaratory law. In this point of view he ſhould have expected the preamble to ſet out, "Whereas doubts have ariſen with reſpect to the meaning of the exiſting laws," &c. He underſtood the Honourable Gentleman in one part of his ſpeech to ſay that the preſent was a temporary Bill. How could any Bill be temporary, which was calculated to explain the meaning of a former ſtatute? The explanation it gave muſt be either true or falſe; and if true or falſe, it could not be applicable merely to a temporary purpoſe, but muſt be equally ſo at any ſubſequent period, as in the preſent moment. If there was any part of the ſpeech of the Learned Gentleman, ſaid Mr. Fox, which nearly carried conviction to me, it was that in which he ſtated that various meanings had been given with reſpect to the ſtatute of Edward the Third; and if in order to remedy this difficulty, he ſhould propoſe to bring in a declaratory law on the ſubject of treaſon, I confeſs I ſhould have no objection, though I apprehend that the declaration which I ſhould approve would be very different from that which would be propoſed by the Honourable Gentleman. The preſent Bill was not declaratory, becauſe it was temporary. It was not declaratory, becauſe the preamble did not ſtate, that any doubts had ariſen with reſpect to the exiſting law. Mr. Fox ſaid, that he had no objection to explain what were his ſentiments with reſpect to the ſtatute of Edward the Third. That ſtatute made a diſtinction between the natural and political life of the King. Compaſſing and imagining to deſtroy the natural life of the King, it made to be treaſon; compaſſing and imagining to deſtroy his political life, it made only

to

to be a misdemeanor, except in the latter instance, where steps were taken for carrying such compassing and imagining into effect, when it also became subject to the penalties of high treason. He knew it would be said, that this distinction was absurd, that the question would be asked, "Was not the political life of the King more precious than his natural life, and ought it not at least to be guarded with equal care?" This mode of reasoning, he remarked, was fallacious. It was not the value of the object which begot a necessity for greater precaution, but the facility with which it might be attacked. When the natural life of the King was concerned, the compassing and imagining to destroy it was made high treason, because, as his Honourable Friend had well observed, it was an act which could be performed by a single man, who was wicked enough to attempt it—it was the work of a single instant, and, between the imagination and completion of which, it was not necessary that the division of a minute should take place. Only so much time was required as was sufficient to pull the trigger of a pistol, or to draw a dagger. In this point of view, he considered the fence put around the life of the King as not so strong as could be wished, though it was as strong as could well be devised. For how was it possible that the life of the King could be better guarded, than by making the mere purpose of compassing and imagining to destroy it subject to the penalties of high treason? With respect to the political life of the King, which he would admit to be a dearer and more precious object, that could never be seriously menaced by the efforts of one individual, nor could it be taken away in a single instant. Rebellion, by which it was endangered, must be the work of a multitude; it must be followed up by a succession of acts; and you might wait for the first act without risquing any very dreadful consequence, or finding it necessary to call forth the utmost vengeance of the law. It was necessary to guard the life of the King, because one attack made by a single individual might prove fatal; the Constitution could only be subverted by a series of measures, in which a numerous body of men must be implicated. The distinction had been well marked by a common expression—The Constitution might be destroyed, it could not be assassinated. Having said so much in defence of the original statute, he wished to give a few words to the various constructions that had been put upon it. He certainly did not acquiesce in many of those constructions. Whether the constructions given by the successive judges ought to be considered as part of the law of the land, was a question upon which he was not competent to decide. But in every case where the law of the land was clearly expressed, he should certainly deem it

 preferable

preferable to the authority of any conſtruction. But even ſuppoſing all the judges who had given conſtructions of the ſtatute to have been correct, ſtill this Bill was attended with a great and material innovation. Whether the point was to be given up he did not know, but as it ſtood at preſent it made conſpiracy to levy war a ſubſtantive treaſon.

The Attorney General explained, that it only put under this deſcription a conſpiracy to levy a direct war, and not to levy an indirect war.

Then, continued Mr. Fox, the point is gained; if in ſome inſtances it made a conſpiracy to levy war a ſubſtantive treaſon, and in others not, it was evident that a material innovation had been made. He had attended to what Hales and Foſter had ſaid upon the ſubject, and he conceived that by this Bill, a conſpiracy to levy war, or to depoſe the King, were to be conſidered in the ſame way as overt acts of compaſſing his death. If it be made treaſon to conſpire to levy war, and the jury ſhould find the fact of the conſpiracy, no matter what was their opinion with reſpect to the intentions of the perſons implicated in the charge, the ſentence muſt be death. Suppoſe, for inſtance, that the jury find in their verdict, that A. B. had conſpired to levy war, to introduce foreign hoſtile powers into the kingdom, and to depoſe the King, but had no intention to compaſs his death. This laſt declaration with reſpect to the intention would be of no avail, the penalties of treaſon would attach from the facts found in the former part of their verdict. What then was the operation of the Bill? If at preſent the Jury found a verdict, that he had conſpired to levy war, and depoſe the King, but had no intention of compaſſing his death, the priſoner would be acquitted. But after this Bill had paſſed into a law, it would only be left to them to determine on the facts, their negative of the intention would be of no conſequence, and the judgment of the Court would follow their verdict. Would Gentlemen tell him, that this was immaterial? Such a propoſition could never be maintained, except it was denied to be material for the ſubject to enjoy protection in thoſe caſes where he moſt needed it. For though he admitted that, with reſpect to the State, treaſon was a crime to be moſt carefully guarded againſt; yet, in this particular inſtance, the Magiſtrate was to be looked to with an eye of greater jealouſy than in any other. In other caſes, though he was the proſecutor, he had no particular intereſt diſtinct from the merits of the queſtion; in the caſe of treaſon a variety of biaſſes might warp him from the ſide of juſtice. The jealouſy of which he here ſpoke, was not a fearful jealouſy. It was recognized in the principles of the law of England.

England. It was proved by the extraordinary precautions with which it had taken care to fortify the accused; a copy of the indictment was necessary, two witnesses were required, &c. What he then considered as the most important alteration introduced by the present Bill was, that it took away from the jury the right which they at present had, to determine both on the fact and the law. They were not then to consider how far the intention of compassing the King's death had existed, but merely to find whether the facts laid in the indictment had been proved. And even though their verdict should express a negative of the treasonable intention, still the prisoner might suffer. He now said a little as to the history of the two acts, the statute of Edward III. and that of Charles II. which was made the foundation of the present measure. The statute of Edward III. was the old constitutional law of treason. Its introduction had freed the jurisprudence of the country from much uncertainty, and it had in no instance been deviated from in later times without producing considerable mischief. The other act was brought in at the period of the restoration, when the people were wearied of the evils they had suffered under the former usurpation, and willing to throw all their liberties into the hands of the Crown. It was to be recollected, that the same Parliament which passed this act, made many other unjustifiable concessions to the King, and, among others, impowered him to raise and pay a body of militia, without any interference of the Legislative Body. But if there was any thing which more peculiarly disgraced that reign, and consigned it to execration and infamy in after times, it was the gross and flagitious abuse of prosecutions. We were now remarked to live in an age when the administration of criminal justice had been more mild, more pure, and more independant, than it had been in the more distant periods of our history. This happy system of things we were now about to exchange, for the example of a period, the most wicked and scandalous that had ever tarnished the annals of the country.

Mr. Fox was here interrupted by a sort of groaning, which we understood to proceed from one of the Members.

Mr. Erskine said, that if this interruption continued, he must call upon the Member to be named.

The Speaker stated, that if the Member did not desist, he should be under the necessity of ordering the standing order to be read, and that in consequence of a complaint from him, the Gentleman, who was the cause of the interruption, would fall under the censure and animadversion of the House.

Mr.

Mr. Fox resumed. He was desiring the House to make a comparison between the reign of Charles II. and the present times. He called upon them to reflect, that of those who were recorded in the history of that former period, the names the most dear to posterity, and the most deserving to be remembered, were those who had perished on the scaffold for high treason. Need he repeat the names of Russel and Sidney? These great men had not been prosecuted on that statute, which was the model of the present Bill, because it was to a certain degree limited, and did not apply to those circumstances under which they were tried. But reference to their names, and the remembrance of their fate, would sufficiently mark the spirit of jurisprudence of those days, and shew what was the nature of that example which we were now desired to copy. The law expired with Charles II. A similar law had been adopted by Richard II. who was shortly after deposed and murdered.—Such, indeed, was not the fate of Charles II. his reign, to those who judged merely from external circumstances (and bad judges of prosperity they must be) appeared long and prosperous. But was there any one who looked to the history of those times, to the unprincipled policy of the Court, and the open profligacy of public measures, who did not consider it as a blemish on the English character, and a reproach to the spirit of our ancestors, that the reign of that Monarch was suffered to be protracted till the period of his natural life? Were these auspicious times, from which to derive a precedent for our present conduct? The Honourable Gentleman had assigned different reasons for adopting this Bill; the necessity of a new law to explain the old statute of treason; the immense quantity of libels which had lately been put in circulation. It was evident, however, that the true reason for bringing forward this Bill was to be found in the proceedings which had taken place on the trials at the Old Bailey. Ministers had taken occasion of the odious attempt upon his Majesty, to sanction a measure, which they durst not before have suggested, and to work upon the best feelings of the people of England, in order to induce them to surrender their dearest rights. With respect to those trials, the Learned Gentleman contended that they had proved much, and that notwithstanding the acquittal, they were calculated to produce a considerable effect on the public mind. In that acquittal he for one had already declared that he most sincerely exulted, and he should ever continue to exult. That acquittal, in his view of the subject, tended to produce an impression of the happiest kind. If there were men to whom the Constitution had begun to appear odious,

 that

that acquittal muſt have ſoftened their animoſity, and diſpoſed them to regard it with a friendly eye; if there were others wavering in their ſentiments, it muſt have had the effect to revive their attachment, and confirm them in the line of their duty. Even if thoſe perſons who had been tried entertained opinions hoſtile to the Conſtitution, and he did not deny that in the ſocieties there were ſome men of that deſcription, ſtill he conſidered it as a glorious event for the Conſtitution itſelf that thoſe perſons had been acquitted. If even men, whoſe ſentiments were hoſtile to the Conſtitution, had found refuge from that ſtrict and impartial juſtice which it adminiſtered to all; ſuch an event he could not but conſider as calculated to convert diſaffection and enmity into admiration and applauſe. With reſpect to the other part of the Bill, what related to miſdemeanors, it was more important, as the queſtions it involved would more frequently occur in the details of juriſprudence. The Bill indeed did not create miſdemeanors, but it defined them in ſuch a manner, as would go greatly to counteract the excellent proviſions of the Libel Bill. The moſt material part, however, was that which impoſed the puniſhment of tranſportation for the ſecond offence. Had the Honourable Gentleman on this part of the ſubject given any anſwer? Or was it poſſible for human ingenuity to give any anſwer to what had been ſo ably ſtated by his Honourable Friend (Mr. Erſkine) that this deſcription of offences was ſo wide and general, that by applying a ſentence of equal ſeverity whenever an offence was repeated, the ſame puniſhment might be made to include the moſt venial errors, and the blackeſt crimes.

It was a great principle of juſtice, that the puniſhment ſhould be proportionate to the offence; but by the regulation now propoſed, this principle would be entirely defeated. There were ſome miſdemeanors of ſo ſlight a nature, which, although a thouſand times repeated, would not, in point of enormity, be equal to one of a more ſerious deſcription. Under the head of miſdemeanors was defined whatever might tend to excite hatred and contempt againſt the Conſtitution. He who complained of the inequality of the repreſentation, and, in illuſtration of his arguments, referred to a borough ſo and ſo ſituated, might, from the operation of this Bill, be ſent to Botany-Bay for ſeven years. "I wiſh," ſaid Mr. Fox, "that it had been death; the puniſhment would not have been more ſevere, and the tyranny would have been better underſtood." If a man twice or thrice attempted to murder his father, without effecting his purpoſe, he would only be puniſhable by fine and impriſonment. He mentioned this only to ſhew the diſproportionate

ſeverity

ſeverity of puniſhment propoſed to be inflicted by the preſent Bill. This ſort of puniſhment was now for the firſt time introduced into this country from the pretended law of Scotland, though ſuch was its horror to Engliſhmen, that when ſome time ſince it had been preſented to their minds, it excited an univerſal ſentiment of indignation. He called it "pretended law," for he would never ſo far degrade Scotland, as to ſuppoſe that it could really be the law of that country. By this innovation an attempt was made to confound all the ideas of criminal juſtice. Had any want of effect, he aſked, been experienced from puniſhments formerly inflicted, becauſe they were not ſufficiently ſevere? He adverted to the caſe of Muir and Palmer—men of enlightened minds, of reſpectable rank in ſociety, of irreproachable morals, who, becauſe they expreſſed themſelves warmly with reſpect to what they conſidered to be grievances, were ſent to Botany-Bay, to aſſociate, not merely with the loweſt of men in point of rank, but with a deſcription of perſons ſo degraded and abandoned, that the neceſſity of aſſociating with them under any circumſtances muſt itſelf conſtitute a conſiderable puniſhment. And what had they reaped from this ſeverity of puniſhment? Had it produced a greater reverence for the laws, or occaſioned a ceſſation of thoſe libels which were the ſubjects of complaint? If it had thoſe effects, what neceſſity was there to reſort to new meaſures? If it had failed, did not experience demonſtrate the futility of again having recourſe to a ſimilar policy? But it was ſaid that in Scotland, where thoſe meaſures had been adopted, no diſcontent exiſted. He believed that the caſe was quite the reverſe, and that the diſcontent really felt in that quarter was not the leſs, becauſe the expreſſions of it had been ſubdued by the terror of puniſhments. If the ſtate of Scotland was as they pretended, they ought not at leaſt to think of extending the penalties of the Bill to that country. If they wiſhed to attach the people to the Conſtitution, they ought to preſerve the mildneſs of its laws. He would aſk the Honourable Gentleman where in the hiſtory of this country he could find an inſtance of ſuch a puniſhment, as that which was now propoſed? He warned them againſt the policy of multiplying new codes of penal laws, and of accumulating oppreſſive reſtrictions, beyond what the temper of the people could bear. But in anſwer to all this, he was told of the unbounded licence uſed by thoſe ſocieties, and was charged with always having ſhunned to ſtate what were his ſentiments reſpecting their views. He had diſtinctly ſaid, that there might be a few perſons in thoſe ſocieties hoſtile to the Conſtitution, but the greater number he believed to be

 ſincere

ſincere in the object which they profeſſed—a Parliamentary Reform. If he was told that there was a ſociety in this town, inſtituted againſt Republicans and Levellers, the principal members of which were hoſtile to the free part of our Government, and were employing every method to degrade and villify the Rights of the People; if he was told that they were purſuing a deliberate ſyſtem for this purpoſe, and that their aim was to be gathered, not merely from ſingle and occaſional publications, but from the daily circulation of their doctrines, and the whole ſeries of their proceedings; and if he was aſked, whether this ſociety was engaged in a conſpiracy to overturn our Conſtitution, and deſtroy our Liberties, he would anſwer, No! That ſuch might be the view of a few leading members, but that he believed the great body of the ſociety to be ſincere in the object for which they had united. Yet this ſociety circulated and recommended the monſtrous doctrine, "that rotten Boroughs, corrupt Majorities, ſelfiſh Miniſters, and an extravagant Court," were the ſupport of our Liberty, and the ſecurity for our Conſtitution. The concluſion to be drawn from this abominable doctrine, he did not aſcribe to every man in that ſociety; the greater number he believed to have united in order to guard the Conſtitution againſt a danger, which they ſuppoſed to be preſſing and imminent. The few who took advantage of their fears for the Conſtitution, in order to forward their own deſigns for its deſtruction; of thoſe he judged from their actions. He knew that, with reſpect to thoſe ſocieties, there were violent opinions on both ſides; but he ſaw Mr. Reeves's ſociety with as much induſtry, and with more means, becauſe with more money, circulating ſuch doctrines as were contained in the ſentence he had juſt quoted; he ſaw them accompanying thoſe doctrines with incendiary hand-bills againſt the Proteſtant Diſſenters, and with every ſpecies of groſs and inflammatory miſrepreſentation. He ſaw, on the other hand, libels aſcribed to the Correſponding Society, ſo monſtrous, that he could only compare them with the others to which he had now referred—with this difference, that when it was propoſed to enquire into their authenticity, the proof was denied. Mr. Fox recapitulated his objections to the Bill, as narrowing the power of the Jury in caſes of treaſon, and as providing for all miſdemeanors a new puniſhment, which would apply with undiſtinguiſhed ſeverity to the greateſt and leaſt degrees of delinquency. The Honourable Gentleman had ſtated the number of libels as a reaſon for the preſent Bill; ſome of theſe libels, he underſtood, had been puniſhed pretty ſeverely, and the publiſhers, who might have been in their beds at the time the books were ſold,

and

and who at any rate had only been in the exercife of their bufinefs, without being aware that they were committing a breach of the law, had been confined for two or three years. One man had been convicted and punifhed on the oath of a perfon who was afterwards found to be guilty of perjury. The Honourable Gentleman had faid, that the libels were fo numerous that they could no longer be profecuted. Was he fatisfied that this feverity would infallibly diminifh their numbers, or that he fhould be able more fafely to apply the new law than the old? If there is a fpirit of difcontent, faid Mr. Fox, fo widely diffufed in the country, and ftill likely to increafe, arifing, as I believe, from the bad Adminiftration, and as the Hon. Gentleman thinks, from the obftinacy and perverfenefs of the people, will it be proper, in order to ftop the progrefs of the evil, to fend to Botany-Bay whole fleets of libellers. The Honourable Gentleman had fpoken of libels againft the King and other perfons. Mr. Fox gave as his opinion, that libelling of this fort had not been fufficiently punifhed. He would profecute with the utmoft feverity all libels on the characters of perfons, with whatever party they were connected. The moft exemplary rigour of this fort, he would connect with equal temperance to libels of another defcription. He would punifh whatever reflected on the dignity of the Chief Magiftrate, or the fair fame of individuals; but all political libels he would leave to themfelves; difcuffion on Government, fo far as it did not interfere with private character, he would permit to be entirely unreftrained; and he was convinced, that if this policy had been adopted fooner, things would not have been in the fituation in which they now were. Mr. Fox concluded with declaring himfelf, on the whole, adverfe to the principle of the prefent Bill. He fhould therefore vote againft the Speaker leaving the chair. If another Bill fhould be brought in lefs exceptionable in its claufes, and better calculated to anfwer the purpofe in view, he fhould have no objection to give it his fupport.

The Master of the Rolls faid, that fome expofitions of the law of treafon had fallen from Gentlemen on the other fide of the Houfe, or elfe they were fuch as fhould not be fuffered to remain a moment unanfwered, both from the falfenefs of their doctrine and their dangerous tendency. The two Gentlemen had conftrued the law of treafon, as relating to the levying war, and to attacks upon the King's perfon, in a manner that perfectly aftonifhed him. According to the pofitions that had been advanced, if a number of men confpired together for the purpofe of depofing the King, and of compelling him to quit this country, they could not (provided there was no intention expreffed of taking away his life) be

indicted for high treafon, unlefs they had actually levied war. He was fure no Lawyer, at leaft, no man who was guided in his own judgment by the adjudications of the Courts, would ferioufly maintain that doctrine. If that, however, was the law, it was high time that fome alteration fhould be made in it; for what fecurity could there exift for a Government, if it was neceffary that the rebellion fhould be actually commenced, and perhaps St. James's attacked, before any of the confpirators could be indicted for high treafon? The other argument was no lefs extraordinary: It was faid, that if any perfons fhould make an attack upon his Majefty's perfon, and even maim and wound him, fuch perfons could not be convicted of high treafon, unlefs the Jury were convinced that there actually exifted an intention of depriving the Sovereign of his life--This was placing an attack upon the King exactly upon the level of an affault with intent to murder an individual, where it was neceffary to prove to a certain degree the intention; but in the cafe of an attack upon the King, it never was expected that the intention fhould be proved, becaufe the impofing a reftraint upon the King's perfon, or attacking him in any way, if proved, left no inference to the Jury--the Law inferred the guilt. He thought it neceffary to ftate, that in one cafe, and one cafe only, the Bill before the Houfe might be confidered as an extenfion of the law of treafon. It had not hitherto been underftood that a confpiracy againft the King was a fubftantive treafon againft his Perfon, but a levying of war againft his authority. The claufe in this Bill would include every act committed againft the regal authority of the King, but every other article which it contained was at this moment treafon by the exifting law of the land. Excepting, indeed, this claufe, the whole of the Bill, he faid, was in effect and purport the fame with the ftatute of Edward III. It might be neceffary in the Committee, he faid, to make fome fpecific declaration of what acts of levying war fhall be deemed treafonable by this Bill, for no man would hefitate to allow that there are fome fpecies which fhould be fo defined. He was not fond of adding to the catalogue of treafons, and inftanced the cafe of Lord George Gordon, which, if it was not treafon, ought to be fo. He denied Mr. Erfkine's affertion that there had been no explanation of the law of treafons, except in bad times. The Honourable and Learned Gentleman had alluded to the ftatute of the 1ft of Mary, in a way not confiftent with his known accuracy. He had alluded to that Act, and to its preamble, and then, hurried away by the warmth of his imagination, had afferted that there were no Acts in that reign for increafing the treafon laws. His

Hon.

Hon. Friend muſt have forgotten the Act of the 2d and 3d of Philip and Mary--But to quit thoſe times of perſecution, and to come to thoſe of later and better times, were there no additions to the law of treaſon in the reign of King William? Was it not increaſed by the Acts of the 3d and 9th years of that Monarch's reign? And was it not again increaſed by the Act of the 6th of Anne, which declared it to be high treaſon to diſpute the power of Parliament to limit the ſucceſſion of the Crown, or to queſtion the Hanover ſucceſſion? Theſe inſtances, he truſted, were ſufficient to ſhew, that even in thoſe times which Gentlemen had applauded ſo highly, the laws of treaſon were always increaſed, in order to meet the exigency of the caſe. But Gentlemen had adverted to the clauſe in the preſent Bill, which inflicted the puniſhment of tranſportation upon adviſedly ſpeaking, &c. and had conſidered it as a total innovation of the Penal Code to puniſh a miſdemeanor in that manner. He wiſhed again to refer to the ſtatute of the 6th of Anne, in which it was enacted, that if any man ſhould, by adviſedly ſpeaking, maintain, that Parliament had no right to limit the ſucceſſion, &c. he ſhould be guilty of a premunire, the puniſhment of which was impriſonment during the King's pleaſure, forfeiture of all lands and tenements, goods and chattels, and incapacity to maintain any action. Tranſportation for a miſdemeanor was by no means new. Perjury, which was a miſdemeanor, was puniſhable with tranſportation; but it appeared to him rather abſurd to attempt to claſs crimes in that manner. He thought the puniſhment ſhould be directed rather to meet the exigency of the caſe, than to be regulated by the particular claſs to which the crime belonged. The queſtion now was, what is the enormity of the offence of conſpiring to produce a hatred and contempt of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, what is the danger threatened to the State by it, and what ought to be the puniſhment? If it be poſſible for a Gentleman of eloquence and talents at the Bar, to perſuade a Jury that levying war againſt the King, or conſpiring his depoſition, was not comprehended in the law of treaſons, it was high time to make an expreſs declaration to that purpoſe. The law now propoſed went to that extent, and to that only; it was abſolutely neceſſary, from the circumſtances of the times, nor in his opinion was it too ſevere in its puniſhments. He concluded by voting for the commitment.

The Houſe then divided upon the commitment of the Bill.

Ayes 203; Noes 40. Majority 163.

The Houſe then reſolved itſelf into a Committee, Mr. Serjeant in the Chair.

Upon

Upon that part of the first clause of the Bill which enacts, tha it shall continue in force during the life of his Majesty, and until the end of the first Session of Parliament after his decease,

Sir William Young said, he thought the provisions of the Bill so necessary, not only at this particular juncture, but as general regulations, that he should move to leave out the words, "during the life of his Majesty," in order to render the Bill permanent.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that although he agreed with the Honourable Baronet that this Bill was of a nature which might, without any violation of the Constitution, or infringement of the liberties of the People, be made permanent, yet as it was framed for the purpose of meeting a temporary exigency, and as it was copied from precedents in different reigns, which were temporary regulations, he was rather of opinion against the Honourable Baronet. Another motive which induced him to oppose the alteration was, that the Bill had been sent down from the Lords with the clause so framed; and, unless there were strong reasons, he should be averse to any amendments which might protract the Bill passing. If at the period which was fixed for the termination of this Act, it should be found proper and adviseable to continue its provisions (which he thought very likely), it would be perfectly competent to the Parliament to do it. With respect to the horrid, diabolical idea, which it was supposed might enter into the minds of some men, of aiming at the life of the Sovereign, in order to terminate this Bill, that was provided against by the clause, that it should continue in force until the end of the first Session of Parliament after a demise of the Crown. For these reasons, although he agreed in his general opinion of the Bill with the Honourable Baronet, he wished him to reconsider his proposed amendment.

Mr. Stanley was astonished that the first alteration proposed in the Bill should be to increase its severity, by prolonging its duration. So far was he from wishing to protract its existence, that he could wish it were only to continue in force one year; but as the other Bill was limited to three years, he should propose the same period, and accordingly made a motion to that effect.

Mr. Barham said, he approved of the present Bills, not as permanent regulations, but as provisions necessary for the exigency of the moment. He was fully sensible of the danger which threatened the Constitution at this time, and therefore wished the present Bills to pass; but he did not wish to see them made a part of the regular law of the country. He thought it by no means a just tribute to his Majesty to say, that he required those guards and secu-

rities for his ſafety, which would be unneceſſary for any future Monarch, becauſe, if any thing could check the deſigns of evil-minded perſons upon the Conſtitution and Government, it was the conſideration of the many amiable qualities and perſonal virtues of his Majeſty. Another reaſon why he wiſhed for the ſhorter term was, that it would make it more palatable to the People, which he conceived to be a moſt deſirable object.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer replied, that the Honourable Gentleman muſt have miſtaken the tendency of this Bill, becauſe it did not enact any new treaſon, except in the ſingle inſtance that had been alluded to; nor did it create any new crime. Its object, as far as related to the treaſon clauſe, was merely to render the law more intelligible, except only in the article of conſpiring to levy war, which, inſtead of being charged as an overt act, to prove a compaſſing the King's death, was now a ſubſtantive treaſon; an alteration which would render the law much more clear, and even more favourable to the party accuſed, as he would have a more diſtinct view of the charge againſt him. He underſtood that it was the intention of his Honourable and Learned Friend to ſuggeſt an amendment in the clauſe of conſpiring to levy war, in order to render the deſcription more definite, and to extend it to levying war againſt both or either Houſes of Parliament; an amendment which he hoped the Committee would approve of, when it was recollected that an attack upon Parliament was more likely to happen, and, if poſſible, more pregnant with danger to the Conſtitution, than an attack upon his Majeſty himſelf. Having ſtated thus much, with reſpect to that part of the Bill which related to the treaſon, it could not be ſuppoſed that he could aſſent to the motion of the Honourable Gentleman for making it a mere temporary proviſion; but as to the miſdemeanor clauſe, it certainly came more under the deſcription of a temporary proviſion, and the Committee would determine whether it ſhould have the ſame duration as the other Bill or not.

General Macleod ſaid he would propoſe an amendment, that inſtead of the words "During the natural life of our Moſt Gracious Sovereign Lord the King, whom Almighty God preſerve and bleſs with a long and proſperous reign," ſhould be inſerted, "During the life of our Moſt Gracious Miniſter Mr. Pitt, whom Almighty God preſerve and bleſs with a long and proſperous Adminiſtration!"

Mr. Barham condemned this levity, as unſuitable to the ſolemnity of the occaſion. He argued for a limited time, on the ground that the country at large would be better ſatisfied.

Mr.

Mr. Baker argued for the period to be extended to the natural life of his Majeſty, and ſtated the impropriety of applying for a renewal of the Bill every three years.

Mr. Hawkins Browne was againſt the propoſed limitation of period.

A diviſion here took place,

That the Bill continue for the natural life of the King, and until the end of the next Seſſion of Parliament after a demiſe of the Crown, - -	129
For the term of three years, - -	6
Majority	123

Mr. Stanley propoſed, that after the expreſſion, "His Majeſty's dominions and countries," ſhould be inſerted, "which he poſſeſſes as King of England."

The Solicitor General ſaid, the words run in the uſual ſtile of Acts of Parliament; his Majeſty's dominions meant Britiſh dominions to which his right of legiſlation extends. His Hanoverian dominions were totally out of the queſtion. The addition was negatived.

An amendment was propoſed by the Solicitor General, and carried, after the words, "or to levy war againſt his Majeſty, his heirs and ſucceſſors, within this realm or without;"—to add, "or by force and conſtraint to compel his Majeſty to alter his meaſures or counſels, or to put any conſtraint upon, to intimidate or overawe either Houſe of Parliament."

Mr. Anstruther remarked, that this amendment went one ſtep farther than the preſent exiſting laws, as it comprehended, as a ſpecies of conſtructive treaſon, the overawing either Houſe of Parliament, which however the neceſſity of the preſent times peculiarly required.

After the words, "malicious and adviſed ſpeaking," was added, "or by any overt act."

The words "or other thing or things" to be left out.

Between the words "adjudged to be a traitor and traitors," inſert after the word "adjudged," "either to ſuffer ſuch puniſhment as may now by law be inflicted in caſes of high miſdemeanors."

The period within which proſecution ſhould be commenced after the offence had been committed, was filled up with the words "ſix calendar months."

The Committee having gone through the clauſes of the Bill, the Houſe was reſumed; the Report of the Committee was brought up, and

and ordered to be printed, and to be taken into the conſideration of the Houſe on next Friday.

The Houſe adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

TUESDAY, DEC. 1.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND preſented an Addreſs from Leeds in favour of the two Bills.

THE MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM preſented one from Buckinghamſhire in favour of them.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

DEC. 1.

SIR W. SCOTT preſented a Petition from 166 of the Inhabitants of Caſtle Baynard Ward, for Parliament to adopt ſome meaſures for the prevention of Seditious Meetings. This Petition, he ſuppoſed, contained the ſenſe of a decided majority of the inhabitants of that Ward; becauſe, out of the 196 perſons who ſigned the former Petition againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament, there were not more than 132 inhabitant houſeholders.

MR. FOX ſaid, it was ſome ſatisfaction to find that this Petition, with many others, contained no approbation of the preſent Bills; and, as to the aſſertion, that there were only 132 of the inhabitants who ſigned the former Petition againſt the Bills, without any perſonal diſreſpect to the Learned Gentleman, he was not bound to believe it, unleſs it was proved in a Committee of Enquiry. He had never known any Petitions coming from the People to that Houſe, but ſuch rumours were circulated; and as to the Learned Gentleman's ſuppoſition, of the decided majority in favour of this Petition, he muſt ſay, it was a very ſtrong ſuppoſition, to ſuppoſe that there were ſo many falſe ſubſcribers on one ſide of the queſtion, none on the other. He again inſiſted, that all Petitions, ſigned at Public Meetings, had more weight, comparatively, than thoſe carried from houſe to houſe; and the reaſon was obvious, when the enormous and intolerable influence of the Crown was conſidered. Till he had poſitive proofs of the contrary, therefore, he was obliged to diſbelieve the Learned Gentleman's aſſertions.

SIR W. SCOTT ſaid, that no ſignatures could be obtained by a fairer method, for there was no ſolicitation whatever.

MR. W. SMITH obſerved, that his Honourable Friend's arguments did not apply excluſively to this Petition.

MR.

Mr. M. A. Taylor prefented a Petition againft the Bills from the Inhabitants of the Town and County of Poole. The Meeting was convened by the Sheriff, who prefided in the Chair. The names were all refpectable, and he was happy in prefenting fuch a Petition, becaufe he thought it did augur well when the inhabitants of a fea-port town like Poole remonftrated; a town which is publicly known to be under Minifterial influence, and where the voters are fo few, when compared with the number of inhabitants, as to amount only in the proportion of 120 voters to near 5,000 inhabitants. The Petition, he faid, came from the Merchants, Traders, and Inhabitants, and many of the Burgeffes names appeared amongft them.

Mr. G. W. Thomas prefented a Petition againft the Bills from the Inhabitants of Chichefter.

Mr. Sheridan prefented a Petition from the Weavers in Spital-Fields, Bethnal-Green, &c. amounting to upwards of 2000 perfons, humbly entreating Parliament not to pafs the Bills into a law, and to endeavour to procure a Peace on fafe and honourable terms.

Mr. Erskine prefented a Petition againft the Convention Bills from 10,000 of the Inhabitants of Glafgow, who are ftill tenacious of their liberties. The language of this Petition was refpectful. He gave notice, however, that three Counter-Petitions would be prefented; one from the Magiftracy of Glafgow, which confifts of 36 perfons who choofe each other, and are exempted from the penalties; another from the Houfe of Merchants, of 36 people chofen from 500, many of whom belonged to the Magiftracy, and had figned the other Petition; and the third from various people, whofe names might be commented on when the Petition fhould be prefented.

Mr. Secretary Dundas was happy that he had the laft Petition which the Learned Gentleman had mentioned, and the other two, he obferved, had already been prefented. The firft was from the political Reprefentatives of Glafgow, and the other from the Guilderie, which, the Learned Gentleman muft have known, confifts of the whole body of Merchants and Traders in Glafgow, as the Guilderie of every Borough is the houfe of trade throughout Scotland. When the Houfe had received the third they would find that the Petitioners confidered themfelves the great body of refpectable inhabitants in Scotland. He then accufed the people on the other part of mifreprefentation, for they fummoned the inhabitants of Glafgow to fign Petitions againft the Bills by beat of drum; ftating

ſtating that, if they paſſed into a law, they would totally annihilate their liberties; and inſinuating, that religious ſocieties could no longer meet; that the ſurviving friends of deceaſed perſons could no longer aſſemble, in any large number, at a funeral; and that all feſtivals would be ſubject to the ſame reſtrictions. Now it ſo happened, that the inhabitants of the town of Glaſgow, who are ſevere and rigid people, and accuſtomed to aſſemble in large bodies at funerals, to pay the laſt honour to the dead, were deceived by theſe miſrepreſentations till the Bills were explained to them, when that part which is diſpoſed to live quietly drew up this Petition, praying that the Bills may be paſſed into laws; and in order that their names might be fairly inveſtigated, they had ſubſcribed their places of abode.

Mr. Erskine ſaid, he did not pretend to be intimately acquainted with the laws and cuſtoms of that part of his native country; but he believed he ran very little danger of being contradicted, when he repeated what he had juſt ſtated. The Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) had called the Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Town-Council of Glaſgow by the pompous phraſe of Political Repreſentatives. The fact was, their number amounted to 36 only; and the number of the Guilderie to no more. The former elected each other; the latter were ſtated to be the Repreſentatives of 500 Merchants; but he believed there was as little communication betwixt the Repreſentatives of that body and their Conſtituents, as they were called, as there was betwixt another body, which he could name, and their Conſtituents. With regard to a drum being beat through the ſtreets, to tell the people, if the Bills in queſtion paſſed into a law their liberties were extinct from that moment, was there any miſrepreſentation in that? No. Alas! it was too true. With reſpect to the prohibition of relatives and friends from attending a funeral, perhaps the perſon that told them this meant to ſay, that in a ſhort time they would as mutes attend the Conſtitution to the grave. Mr. Erſkine added, upon the authority of Mr. Oſwald, that the 36 Perſons of the Guilderie were a Select Committee out of the 500 Merchants, and that the names of many of thoſe 500 Merchants who conſtituted that Committee were ſubſcribed to this Petition.

Mr. Fox admitted, that, in uſual caſes, perſons of property are the moſt to be reſpected, as being more concerned in the well-being of the State; but on this occaſion they ought to be excepted, becauſe people in a certain rank of life are always able to convey their complaints to the Legiſlature, while theſe Bills, if carried into

law, more particularly affect the lower orders of people, by depriving them of that comparatively ſmall ſhare in the Government which they poſſeſs. As to the ſubject of miſrepreſentation, he begged leave to inform the Houſe, that a hand-bill had been ſent to the Mayor of Caermarthen from the Poſt-Office, though he could not ſuppoſe with the direction or connivance of any perſon in that Houſe, which ſtated, that the Bills would not affect the Right of Petitioning, nor any Meeting called by the Sheriff, or of which previous notice was given by advertiſement, the contrary of which Mr. Fox demonſtrated, by a repetition of thoſe arguments which he had uſed upon the general principles of the Bills.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, that if the Poſt-Office was made the head-quarters for the circulation of libels and prints at the expence of the public money, it was a ſerious thing, and muſt be inquired into, for it would make the ground of a charge. He then begged leave to ſtate what had come from an Honourable Alderman (Anderſon) on the other ſide, in the way of miſrepreſentation. That Alderman had aſſigned a factious purpoſe to the Gentlemen of his Ward, who addreſſed a Requiſition to him for calling a Meeting, as the reaſon for his refuſal, and the four Gentlemen who waited on him for his anſwer have ſince publicly declared, in an advertiſement, that they did not utter one word about Mr. Pitt or Mr. Fox, as the Alderman had repreſented. Mr. Sheridan remarked, that though ſuch a ſtatement had been ſuffered to paſs ſlightly in that Houſe, like the tale about the turnpike, it was not conſiſtent with the dignity of the character of an Alderman and Magiſtrate to make ſuch miſrepreſentation.

Mr. Alderman Anderson ſaid, he had ſeen an advertiſement in the Morning Chronicle, which meant to miſrepreſent his public conduct; but he deſpiſed the advertiſement and thoſe who ſigned it. He did not aſſert, he ſaid, that thoſe perſons made that obſervation, but ſeeing that they wanted to take him by ſurpriſe, in making their application to him, he declined giving any anſwer till the next day, when the Delegate from thoſe perſons who ſigned the Requiſition made that obſervation. He declared upon his honour that this was the true ſtate of the caſe, and he hoped it was ſatisfactory.

Mr. Erskine brought up the Glaſgow Petition, which was read.

Mr. Secretary Dundas obſerved, that, upon the face of the Petition there was a groſs miſrepreſentation; for it ſtated, that every Meeting, if theſe Bills paſſed into law, would be under the uncontrouled authority of the Magiſtrates.

Mr. Erskine deſired the Right Honourable Secretary to look at the date of the Petition, and recollect that, at that time, ſuch

was

was the object of the Bills; which, he underſtood, were altered in the Committee.

Mr. Secretary Dundas explained, that, on the firſt appearance of the Bills, no Meeting of any eſtabliſhed, conſtituted authority, was ſo controuled.

Mr. Fox had no difficulty in ſaying, that all Meetings will, in general, be under the cognizance of magiſtrates by the paſſing of theſe Bills; and it was not inaccurate in the Petition to ſtate ſo. But he ſaw the drift of Government plainly enough.—It is to repreſent the Petitions againſt the Bills as miſrepreſentations, that they may not be attended to. Hitherto the Parliament had always been diſpoſed to conſider the Petitions of the People in an indulgent and favourable view.

The Attorney General wiſhed the propoſitions of the Petitions to be looked to with a conſcientious regard; to examine the truth of them, and, if the truth could be ſuſtained, to obey them; but, if not, it was their duty to convince the people that the ſubject had been totally miſunderſtood.

Mr. Erskine preſented a Petition againſt the Bills from the Bookſellers, Stationers, Printers, and Paper-makers, who conceived that, if they paſſed into a Law, they were ſo immediately connected with the Liberty of the Preſs as to threaten their bankruptcy and the ruin of their families.

The Attorney General wiſhed this queſtion to be debated and decided how juſtly the Bills could be ſaid to touch the Liberties of the Preſs.

A Petition from the Aldermen and Clergy of the Borough of St. Alban's, for meaſures to prevent Seditious Meetings, was preſented.

Mr. Henry Thornton preſented one to the ſame effect from the Inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark. When the Inhabitants were convened upon a former occaſion, he ſaid, 5000 people were aſſembled in the Town Hall, and the majority in favour of a Petition againſt the Bills was ſo great, that, according to the report of ſome people, there were four and five to one, and in the opinion of others ſeven and eight to one. That Meeting, he confeſſed, was not otherwiſe tumultuous than any other Meeting in a Town-Hall, and therefore, though of a different opinion himſelf on the nature and neceſſity of the Bills in queſtion, and believing that a Repreſentativeisnot always bound to adopt the ſentiments of his Conſtituents, he thought their general ſenſe was decidedly againſt the Bills, and truſted to a future opportunity for explaining his diſſent from them to their ſatisfaction. It was with no ſmall

plea-

pleasure that he now informed the House he was able to judge of the general sense of his Constituents with accuracy, and he found from experience of three parishes out of five, that the majority admitted the necessity and approved the construction of the Bills. The way in which he deduced this opinion was upon the following facts. Some Gentlemen had prepared the Petition which he now presented, and waited on the Inhabitants at their own houses. Two thirds of the Inhabitants declined all interference, but left it to the care of their Representatives; many of them were not at home when the gentlemen called, who never made a second application, and the remainder were of opinions in opposition to the Bills; yet the Petition contained 720 signatures, and there were never more than 1800 Electors, so that one half of the whole of the housekeepers of Southwark, paying scot and lot, that is, high and low, excluding those who pay no taxes, might be said to be in favour of the Bill.

Lord John Russel did not rise to object to bringing up the Petition, but he wondered how the Honourable Gentleman could state that Petition to be the general sense of the Inhabibants, or allow it to be a decided majority, even if the Electors were no more than 1800, though Lord John Russel had heard them computed at 2000. There was a material difference, however, he observed, in the manner of signing the two Petitions. This was only signed by three parishes out of five after preparation, opportunity, and individual application, while the other was voluntarily signed in the space of twenty-four hours only, by upwards of 800.

The Order of the Day being read for taking into consideration the Report of the Committee on the Seditious Meeting Bill,

Mr. Fox said, he did not mean to debate the Bill in the present stage of it. He rose chiefly to ask a question. It related chiefly to the clause which stated, that "if any place be opened and money taken, &c. for the purpose of debating any question of a political nature, without a licence, or being opened for any other purpose, and a debate might arise on a political subject, &c. then that such place should be considered as disorderly, &c. He wished to know what was the understanding of the framers of the Bill, as to the operation of that clause? Did they not conceive it would take under it all Meetings whatever, where money was taken, and where afterwards any conversation might possibly take place on political subjects? For in every public Meeting such a debate might arise, and very innocently arise. Any Meeting at the London Tavern, or any Meeting of the Whig Club, for instance. In

all

all theſe places, where gentlemen met and paid their money for tickets or paid money for their accommodation, at the tavern, coffee-houſe, or any other public place, he apprehended they would all be liable to the penalty of this clauſe. He was ſure there would be a great difficulty upon this occaſion, for the promoters of the Bill to keep it within the limits, which they themſelves profeſſed that the Bill was intended for. If the clauſe ſtood as it was, he apprehended that all Public Meetings whatever might come under this prohibition, ſince no Meeting could be had, the expence of which muſt not be defrayed by ſomebody, and no Meeting could be called together, in which it was not poſſible at leaſt, that ſome converſation might be had on a political ſubject. On the other hand, if the clauſe was to be confined to Meetings where money was paid ſolely for admiſſion to hear lectures or debates on political ſubjects, then again Mr. Thelwall, or any other perſon, might open a houſe, and by retailing tea, coffee, or any other refreſhment, the whole of the purpoſe of the Bill might be evaded. The power of diſcrimination might, perhaps, be left to the Magiſtrates: it was, however, impoſſible for them, who were too often illiterate perſons, to put the proper conſtruction on an Act of Parliament, which the Legiſlature themſelves did not comprehend. To inveſt them with diſcretionary power was dangerous in the extreme; and it ſurely never could be the policy of this kingdom to ſuffer them to diſſolve Meetings for the improvements of arts and ſciences, which, under certain circumſtances, they would under the Bill be empowered to do. He did not ſtate theſe things with any view of ſhewing that he approved of any thing in the Bill, for he deteſted the principle of it, but he ſtated them for the purpoſe of knowing in what light they ſtruck the authors of the Bill, in order that the way might be cleared for a debate on the third reading, and that he might not be entangled with perpetual recurrence to the proviſions of the Bill, when he ſhould then oppoſe it. In ſhort, he wanted to know of the promoters of the Bill what it was which the Bill would, and what it would not prohibit?

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he ſaw a good deal of difficulty in defining what were the exact ſhades on which a diſtinction ſhould be made between different Meetings, where money was taken. He thought that in the caſe of Meetings of local concerns, and of other things which had not in reality the object of political diſcuſſion and debates, or lectures on politics, and were not brought on under an avowed title of another ſort, with a view to evade the purpoſe of the Bill, they would not fall under the prohibition. But it was impoſſible, he feared, to lay down ſuch

 rules

rules as would not give a certain latitude of construction to those who shall have power to enforce the Bill. But he was ready to say, that no provision should be made in the Bill, which would enable any persons, under any pretence whatever, to deliver those lectures or discourses, which were universally admitted to be nuisances, and in the suppression of which the community were deeply interested. He was not aware of any possible mode of making the distinction of public meetings perfectly precise and distinct, and therefore he thought that the distinctions should be made as the cases should arise. If any Gentleman had any thing to offer, he should be glad to hear it; but he must be allowed to lament that Gentlemen came forward with such objections at this stage, after declining to attend the Bill in the Committee.

Mr. Fox said, he was no friend to the Bill in any part of it, and this he had often stated; and he had also often stated, that he should not attend the Committee on it. He did not state this objection with any thought that it could be removed, because he was confident it was quite impossible to remove it. He stated the objection to shew that impossibility, and therefore to prepare the way for shewing the impossibility of carrying the Bill into effect, and to make use of that argument when he came to debate its principle on the third reading; and what he had heard from the Minister this moment confirmed him in his opinion, for he had already proved, that the very authors of the Bill could not explain to the House the extent of that Bill. It was curious to observe the Minister urging the House to pass a Bill, the meaning of which even its very authors did not know, but was to be found out by those who were commanded to put it in execution.

The Attorney General declared, he could not bring his mind to conceive that the words could be tortured to the sense Gentlemen had been pleased to give them. He wished to call to their recollection a law framed by a Learned Gentleman of great abilities in the year 1781, (Mr. Mansfield) for preventing public meetings on the Sabbath, professedly for explaining the Scriptures, but really for certain wicked purposes. That Act, liable as it undoubtedly was to all the objections that had been urged in the present instance, passed with the concurrence of the Right Honourable Gentleman and both Houses of Parliament. It was plain, that, if any meeting was held for the express purposes prohibited, it became punishable. If, on the other hand, a meeting was held expressly for another purpose, but really for any of the prohibited purposes, ought it not to be equally punished? Gentlemen might have suggested, if they were so inclined, amendments; instead

inſtead of purſuing that regular parliamentary method of amending any clauſe of the Bill that they might conſider to require modification, they oppoſed the whole, on account of a ſingle objection to a part of it. He wiſhed the Houſe to conſider, whether this partial grievance was to ſuperſede the public advantage ariſing from the prohibition of the miſchief.

MR. SHERIDAN ſaid, that the principle of the Sunday's Bill alluded to by the Learned Gentleman, did not apply to the preſent caſe. The Bill, he thought, could admit of no amendment. It went to prevent all diſcuſſion upon political ſubjects. For inſtance, the Whig Club, or any meeting of a ſimilar nature, could not aſſemble without rendering the place of meeting a diſorderly houſe under the Bill. It was nothing in the operation of the clauſe, whether the place was always uſed for ſuch diſcuſſions, but wherever money was taken for the liberty of the place, a licence became neceſſary, if political topics were at all introduced.

MR. ANSTRUTHER ſaid, that if he underſtood the objection, it was, that if any clubs or aſſemblies, however innocent in their nature, and different in their object, incidentally fell into debate on political ſubjects, they would be comprehended under this clauſe. He did not think, however, that this was the caſe; but if a club, profeſſedly for an innocent purpoſe, admitted diſcuſſions of a political nature under that pretext, he thought they ſhould be ſtopt. The queſtion then came to this—That if the object was directly political, there was no doubt; and if a different profeſſion was abuſed, there was room for the diſcretion of the Magiſtrate to interfere.

MR. GREY ſaid, that his Honourable Friend's (Mr. Fox) objection had not been fairly met, for if a meeting did in fact take place, where political diſcuſſion aroſe, it would be under the Bill as it ſtands, ſince there was no mention in it of the pretence of the meeting. Were there to be a County Meeting, called for the purpoſe of petitioning againſt any grievance, at any inn, where each perſon paid for his proportion, the diſcuſſion of the buſineſs of the meeting would come under the words of the Bill, and without a licence the houſe would be liable to be conſidered diſorderly. "Policy" was a word of very general deſcription, and might include every ſpecies of meeting on general topics. On this ſide of the Houſe, he ſaid, it had been maintained at firſt, that friendly ſocieties would be ſubject to it, as "meetings on any pretence, where politics might be debated," were forbidden, but theſe words, "any pretence," had been ſince put out, which confirmed him in that opinion. Every other meeting, lectures on law, or any other ſubject, would be comprehended; and where money is taken for ad-

miſſion into any room, where politics become the topic of converſation, the Bill would interfere.

Mr. Anstruther ſaid, he ſaw he had been miſconceived. He meant, that if a meeting was, *bona fide*, for one purpoſe, and, *de facto*, for political diſcuſſion, it ought to come under the prohibition.

Mr. Sheridan deſired from the Learned Gentlemen an anſwer to the queſtion, Whether a meeting, ſuch as the Whig Club, would compel the Maſter of the houſe to take out the licence?

Mr. Mainwaring ſtated the hardſhips to which the Publicans imagined they would be expoſed, and ſaid, that on the laſt reading of the Bill he would introduce a clauſe, by which they ſhould be exempted from the conſequences of the law, where political diſcuſſions were introduced without their knowledge or conſent.

The Solicitor General reminded the Houſe, that whatever might be the conſtruction of this clauſe, it would, after all, remain for a Court and a Jury to determine upon it, and that therefore there was not that ſort of diſcretionary power veſted in a Magiſtrate which had been ſuppoſed. He ſaid, it was certainly not the object of thoſe who brought in the Bill to put Vintners and Publicans under reſtrictions, or to harraſs them with penalties. In order to charge the Maſter of a houſe with a penalty, it muſt be proved that theſe Political or Debating Clubs were held with his knowledge; and that the original deſign of the meeting of ſuch perſons was for the expreſs purpoſe of holding ſuch political diſcuſſions, and where money was paid on admiſſion, for that expreſs purpoſe: before any Maſter of a houſe could therefore be charged with a penalty, it muſt be proved that the meeting was held in it with his cognizance, and that the money was paid on admiſſion, for the purpoſe of public debate. If a meeting or aſſembly was convened for one purpoſe, and converted to ſome other purpoſe than that which was intended, the Maſter of the houſe was not in that caſe liable to the penalties of the Bill. It would indeed be a moſt extravagant conſtruction of the clauſe, that a perſon ſhould be made liable to penalties, becauſe thoſe preſent at a public entertainment might be forced to hear things contrary to the profeſſed intention of their attendance. It never could be ſuppoſed, that, becauſe perſons meet to dine at a tavern, and the converſation afterwards turns on political ſubjects, therefore the Tavern-keepers ſhould be liable to puniſhment. Such ſeverity would be peculiarly prepoſterous in penal Acts, which muſt be conſtrued by a Jury; and, in ſuch caſes, the leaning both of the Court and Jury was always againſt extending the meaning of an Act, and againſt including

any.

any perſon not directly within the purport of it. With regard to country or county meetings, where money was paid for the uſe of a room, he could not ſee how ſuch a meeting could come within the meaning of the Act.

Mr. Grey ſtated again the caſe of a meeting to require the Magiſtrate to ſign a requiſition; and as the Bill expreſsly ſaid, that if any perſon or perſons pay or receive money, &c. he contended that ſuch meeting came within the prohibition. Every perſon uſually paid a ſhilling for admiſſion; and hence it was clear, from the nature of their enquiry, that the meeting was prohibited by the Bill.

Mr. M. Robinson ſaid, he could only collect, that the Solicitor General was unable to give any clear opinion upon the Bill, as he had not had it in his power diſtinctly to ſtate his own opinion.

Mr. Powis thought the diſcuſſion irregular. He thought the grievance complained of merely ideal, nor was there any particular hardſhip in Publicans paying an additional ſhilling for their licence, if political queſtions were to be agitated in their houſes.

Mr. Fox roſe to move an adjournment of the farther conſideration of the Report of the Committee, to give time to the Houſe to underſtand the Bill ſufficiently, and to Gentlemen on the other ſide to communicate their ſentiments, and determine what was the real meaning of the clauſe to which he had objected. With reſpect to what had fallen from an Honourable Gentleman, (Mr. Powis) that there was no hardſhip in the caſes he had ſtated, he would affirm that no man could make ſuch an aſſertion who underſtood the Bill, or was acquainted with the Conſtitution. The difference of opinion among the Learned Gentlemen on the other ſide convinced him of the neceſſity of delay, and he would therefore move, that inſtead of "read now," the words "read to-morrow" be inſerted in the queſtion of farther reading the Report.

Mr. Sheridan ſeconded the motion, and ſaid, he would aſk the ſeven Learned Gentlemen ranged in ſable array over againſt him, whether or not, under the Bill, a houſe became diſorderly as ſoon as political topics were introduced by any company aſſembled in it? He ſtated the hardſhips under which the Publicans would labour, if they were forced to have a licence, which an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Powis) conſidered ſo ſlight a grievance, as theſe licences would be given or refuſed, according to the whim or to the corruption of Magiſtrates. He ſaid, that a licence might be given for Mr. Reeves's Aſſociation, while the Whig Club and the Friends of the People might prevent the houſe where they met from obtaining a licence.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer could not ſee the propriety of delaying the conſideration of the whole Report, on account

count of the difficulty which had arifen as to any one claufe; and faid, that Gentlemen on the other fide ought to have contributed their affiftance in amending the Bill in the Committee, inftead of referving their objections to this ftage.

Mr. Grey reminded the Houfe that this difcuffion had arifen from a queftion put by his Honourable Friend (Mr. Fox), to which feveral attempts had been made, without fuccefs, to give an anfwer.

The queftion being put on Mr. Fox's amendment, it was negatived without a divifion.

The Gentlemen of the Oppofition then walked off.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer faid, that it was by no means the intention of the framers and fupporters of the Bill to lay the reftraints reprefented by fome Gentlemen on Meetings for figning Requifitions, or on Lectures, or other Meetings that were not of the defcription which the Houfe would unanimoufly pronounce to be intolerable, and utterly inconfiftent with order and good government; namely, thofe Seditious Lectures on which men employed their talents in order to gain a livelihood. He had, in confequence of feveral fuggeftions, an amendment to propofe, which he thought would obviate all difficulties: and he fhould be happy to hear any further fuggeftions, in order to render it more perfect. In doing this, he obferved he was not departing from any part of the original defign, but merely reconciling and adapting the Bill to the purpofe for which it was intended. The amendment was to make a licence from the Magiftrates neceffary "for any houfe, room, field, or other place in which a Meeting fhould be held, or Lectures delivered, difcuffing the Laws, Policy, or Conftitution of this kingdom, for which purpofe money or any other valuable things fhould be received from the perfons who attended them."

Mr. Stanley, in confequence of the extenfive fignification of the words, Law and Conftitution, propofed a further amendment to the objects of the Meetings, by ufing the words "difcourfes or lectures tending to bring his Majefty's name and authority into contempt, &c.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer thought it would be a fufficient anfwer to this propofal, fimply to ftate the aukwardnefs and abfurdity of making a licence neceffary to a Meeting for bringing the King's authority into contempt.

The amendment moved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was then agreed to.

The Solicitor General moved an amendment, to obviate the inconveniencies that might arife from the Printers of Newfpapers refufing to infert notices for Public Meetings, and propofed

that

that a notice, left with the Clerk of the Peace, ſhould be ſufficient for the purpoſe, which was agreed to.

He alſo moved, that to the words "Lords Lieutenant of Counties and Sheriffs," ſhould be added "the Conveners of Counties in Scotland," which was alſo agreed to.

The Bill was then ordered to be engroſſed and read a third time on Thurſday, the 3d.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

AT a numerous Meeting of the Freemen of Lancaſter, convened by public Advertiſement, at the Falcon Tavern, in Fetter-lane, on Tueſday the 1ſt day of December, 1795,

MR. TROUGHTON, Chairman,

Reſolved, That a Petition to the Honourable the Houſe of Commons againſt the Bills now depending, intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," and an Act intituled "An Act for the Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," be prepared for the ſignatures of the Freemen of Lancaſter, reſident in or near London, and left at the abovementioned Tavern, at the Cock and Hoop, Holborn; and at the King's Arms, Poland-ſtreet, Oxford-road.

Reſolved, That Sir George Warren and J. W. Dent, Eſq. Repreſentatives of the ſaid Borough, be requeſted to preſent the ſame.

TO THE WORTHY FREEHOLDERS OF YORKSHIRE.

IF it be merit to endure with patience the calamities of a diſaſtrous war, as raſhly undertaken, as it has been unwiſely conducted; or if it be virtue to ſubmit with compoſure to the horrors of a famine, produced in a great meaſure by the waſte and deſolation of hoſtilities, in which the greateſt part of Europe has been engaged, that merit, and that virtue, my worthy friends, has been ſufficiently yours.

The ſituation of your country now demands that other virtues be exerted; the impending danger loudly warns you, that patience and ſubmiſſive compoſure muſt now be changed to fortitude, public ſpirit, and an active, but well-tempered zeal for peace, and the preſervation of the rights and liberties of the Engliſh nation.

You have ſeen the ſyſtem of a State inquiſition, begun by the employment of ſpies and informers in every corner of the kingdom; you have witneſſed the growth of that ſyſtem, in its natural conſequences, the moſt violent ſtate of proſecutions, and the moſt rigorous and unprecedented puniſhments; and you now witneſs the ſyſtem nearly arrived at its full maturity, in the Bills depending at this moment in Parliament. Already you are appriſed, that if theſe Bills ſhould paſs into laws, your ancient and indubitable right to free diſcuſſion, and free petition to the Legiſlature for redreſs of grievances, will be for ever loſt.

The caſe is too plain for argument—the danger too urgent for delay.

To prevent the declaration of our ſenſe on theſe pernicious meaſures, the Miniſters hurry theſe Bills through Parliament with unuſual rapidity; and in a few days this great county muſt aſſemble, or the opportunity to proteſt againſt

againſt this violation of the fundamental rights of the people of England will be paſſed away.

Come forth then from your looms, ye honeſt and induſtrious clothiers; quit the labours of your fields, for one day, ye ſtout and independent yeomen; come forth in the ſpirit of your anceſtors, and ſhew you deſerve to be free. Come forth, not to flatter courts, or compliment your liberties away, nor yet to ſanction tumult, or countenance the deſigns of levellers and republicans; but peaceably and legally, while the laws permit you, with honeſt and prudent zeal to expreſs to the King the genuine truth from your hearts, to declare your abhorrence and deteſtation of the late baſe and unmanly outrage on his Majeſty's perſon, and your firm attachment to the Conſtitution, on its genuine principles, and in all its branches; at the ſame time to lay at the foot of the Throne your moſt humble intreaty, ſupplicating his Majeſty, that the fundamental laws of the land may remain unchanged; that the Bills in queſtion, ſhould they paſs the two Houſes of Parliament, may not receive the royal aſſent; and that his Majeſty, conſidering the diſtreſs and danger of the country, occaſioned by the preſent calamitous war, may be graciouſly pleaſed to terminate that diſtreſs and danger, by a ſpeedy peace.

Theſe are the meaſures, my worthy fellow-citizens, which the urgent danger of the public calls for; they are meaſures calculated to reſtore the bleſſings of peace, to maintain the Conſtitution on its true baſis; to ſecure the rights of the nation on their ancient foundation; and, by preventing the fatal extremes of deſpotiſm and anarchy, to ſecure at once juſt government, and rational liberty.

If, then, the meaſures alluded to, or any other meaſures of a ſimilar tendency, ſhould be propoſed to your conſideration, by the movers of the meeting, it is humbly hoped they will receive your ſupport.

York, Nov. 27, 1795. C. WYVILL.

CLERKENWELL, *Nov.* 26.

AT a numerous Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Pariſh, it was unanimouſly reſolved, that the following Addreſs ſhould be preſented to his Majeſty:

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

SIRE,

We, your Majeſty's loyal and dutiful ſubjects, the Inhabitants of Clerkenwell, beg leave to join in the general congratulations upon your Majeſty's late happy and providential eſcape, from the daring outrage committed againſt your ſacred perſon, and to expreſs our abhorrence of the atrocious deed, earneſtly hoping that the perpetrators may be detected. We rejoice that there are laws in being adequate to puniſh every ſpecies of crime, and prevent in future the repetition of ſuch an horrid attempt.

We, your Majeſty's dutiful ſubjects, alſo truſt, that from your Majeſty's well-known concern for the welfare of your ſubjects in general, your Majeſty will not be offended at our expreſſing an earneſt wiſh to be ſpeedily relieved from the ſevere preſſure of thoſe burdens, inevitably attendant upon war, and that your Majeſty may ſoon have the ſatisfaction of beholding your realm again flouriſhing in proſperity and peace.

And believing as we firmly do, that your Majeſty's Miniſters have juſtly forfeited and loſt the confidence of a great majority of your faithful ſubjects,

we humbly beſeech your Majeſty to diſmiſs them from your preſence and councils.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the following Petition be preſented to the Houſe of Commons:

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

The Humble Petition of the Inhabitants of CLERKENWELL,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners have ever regarded the Laws and Conſtitution of this country, as the higheſt effort of human wiſdom; and though they are not inſenſible of ſome exiſting evils, ariſing from length of time and change of circumſtances, they yet admire them as the moſt complete ſyſtem of ſound policy now extant, being admirably calculated to preſerve, by a due balance, the prerogatives of the Crown, and the liberties of the ſubject; and your Petitioners flattered themſelves, that no Adminiſtration would ever be found raſh enough to attempt any infringement upon the indiſputable rights of Engliſhmen—rights which, even in reigns confeſſedly tyrannical, have been ſo often acknowledged and ratified.

But your Petitioners with the deepeſt regret behold that period now arrived. The two Bills at this time pending, the one intituled—"An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" the other, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," threaten at once to deſtroy the glorious fabric of freedom, long venerated as the moſt noble and valuable inheritance we have received from our anceſtors, and which we ardently hope will deſcend unimpaired to our poſterity.

They therefore moſt humbly lay their real ſentiments and apprehenſions before this Right Honourable Houſe, truſting that you, animated by the ſame ſpirit as the free nation you repreſent, will be actuated by the ſame liberal ſenſations, and will not ſuffer theſe Bills, which would infallibly enſlave the ſubject, and deſtroy all confidence between the Legiſlature and the people, to paſs your Honourable Houſe.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That Mr. Byng, Mr. Grey, or Mr. Fox, be requeſted to preſent the ſame. R. POLLARD in the Chair.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Pollard for his liberal and impartial conduct in the Chair.

CROWN TAVERN, CLERKENWELL-GREEN, *Nov.* 30, 1795.

WILLIAM MARMADUKE SELLON, Eſq. in the Chair.

AT a numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of St. James and St. John, Clerkenwell, in the County of Middleſex, it was, among other things, reſolved to preſent a dutiful and loyal Addreſs to his Majeſty expreſſive of their ſorrow for the daring outrage lately committed againſt his Majeſty's perſon, and to petition the Honourable the Houſe of Commons to take ſpeedily ſuch temporary meaſures as in its wiſdom might appear to be moſt conducive for effectually ſupporting peace and good order throughout the realm; and that the Addreſs and Petition ſhould be left at

The Crown Tavern, Clerkenwell Green,
The Bird in Hand, Northampton-ſtreet,
The Albemarle-Head, St. John-ſquare,
Mr. Bunyer's, St. John's Gate,
The King of Pruſſia, St. John's-ſtreet-road,

The

The Spa, Rosoman's-row,
The Penton Arms, Pentonville,
The Vernon Arms, Pentonville, and
The Horseshoe and Magpye, Coldbath-square,

for the signatures of such of the inhabitants as might approve thereof.

The Thanks of the Meeting were unanimously voted to Mr. Stephen Murrell, the Churchwarden, for his manly and spirited opposition to the measures of the late Petitioners, calling themselves Inhabitants of Clerkenwell, by refusing them the use of the Church for the discussion of politics.

W. M. SELLON, Chairman.

The Thanks of the Meeting were unanimously voted to the Chairman for his able and impartial conduct.

A COUNTER Petition and Address have been attempted to be smuggled through the parish of Clerkenwell, in opposition to the general sense of its numerous inhabitants, who publicly came forward last week at the Belvidere, Pentonville, to petition against two Bills now pending in Parliament.—It was actually smuggled; for the party favouring the obnoxious Bills, instead of being assembled by public notice, and meeting in the fair face of day, were convened by a *private note, privately* sent to the chosen few, *sealed*, but *not signed*, to meet by night at a tavern! This Meeting was composed of the Ministers, one out of four Churchwardens (and he a junior), one out of four Sidesmen, one out of five Overseers, and a few others who assume the name of "Guardians of the Poor," &c. The whole Meeting consisted of about sixty persons; and it is worthy of remark, that unanimity *did not* pervade this *very numerous* Meeting.

These Gentlemen have not only presumed to oppose the general sense of the inhabitants, but, to further their illiberal designs, have employed tax-gatherers and others to hawk the Petition from house to house, and, to obtain signatures, they have even descended to menaces and falsehood, by pretending themselves inimical to the present Administration and the two Bills. Every liberal mind will argue, that a bad cause alone requires such support.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

Committee-Room, Dec. 2, 1795.

A GENERAL Meeting of this Society, and other Friends to the Liberties of the Country, will be held on Monday, the 7th instant, in Mary-le-bone Fields, near the Jew's Harp House, for the yet constitutional purposes of petitioning the King against the odious measures of his Ministers, and praying for their removal; also for addressing the British nation at this alarming crisis.

ENGLISHMEN!

The moment is arrived when you must decide between a base dereliction, or a loud and full assertion of those rights obtained and handed down by your ancestors, at the expence of their best blood. The Ministers of this fatal time; they who have brought you to this crisis, confidently triumph, and count on your servility, from your long and virtuous patience. Your character and your fate is at stake, and this one solitary opportunity is left to your hapless country, by exercising the humble privilege of petitioning.

Chair to be taken at 12 o'clock precisely.

Signed by order of the Committee,
JOHN ASHLEY, Secretary,
ALEX. GALLOWAY, Assistant Sec.

AT

AT a ſpecial Meeting of the BERMONDSEY ASSOCIATION, for the ſupport of the King and Conſtitution, held in the Committee-Room the 27th of November, 1795,

WILLIAM RICHARDSON, Eſq. in the Chair,

The following Reſolutions were read and approved.

Reſolved, That at the preſent alarming criſis we think ourſelves particularly called upon to renew the declaration of our ſentiments, and to teſtify our abhorrence of the wanton and atrocious attack upon a vital branch of the Conſtitution, by a wicked attempt to deſtroy the beſt of Sovereigns, when about to exerciſe his regal function, in opening the preſent Seſſion of Parliament.

That we are convinced from daily obſervation, that the ſyſtem adopted by various ſeditious ſocieties has been the means of alienating the minds of the poorer claſs of our countrymen from a reſpect to laws, wiſely adapted to their ſupport, comfort, and happineſs; and that the effect of ſuch Meetings hath occaſioned the abominable act, ſo juſtly reprobated by every good and loyal ſubject.

That we depend on the wiſdom and prudence of Parliament, to put a timely check to all ſuch improper Meetings, by ſtrengthening the exiſting laws, to which end we conceive the Bills now pending in Parliament, the one intituled "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and the other "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies;" will be efficient, and prove a barrier to the Conſtitution, tending to the protection of religion, laws, and property; without, in effect, infringing on the liberty of peaceable and well-diſpoſed ſubjects.

That we now declare ourſelves pledged, both with our lives and fortunes, to ſtand forth in the defence of our religion and laws; and do invite all the loyal Inhabitants, who approve our ſentiments, to join us in the protection of every thing that is dear to us as men, as Engliſhmen, and as Chriſtians; wiſhing only to enforce a due obſervance of the laws, and to maintain peace and good order, in oppoſition to thoſe who, by their miſguided zeal, moſt probably would produce anarchy, confuſion, tumult and riot.

Reſolved, That theſe Reſolutions be ſigned by the Chairman, and inſerted in three of the daily Papers. W. RICHARDSON, Chairman.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his impartial conduct in the chair.

AT a Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants of the County of HUNTINGDON, holden purſuant to public Advertiſement, at the Court-hall, in and for the ſaid County, on Saturday, the 21ſt day of November, 1795,

An Addreſs to the King's Moſt Excellent Majeſty was propoſed, and unanimouſly agreed to: [See Appendix.]

At the ſame Meeting, the following Petition to the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled, was propoſed and agreed to.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain, in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants of the County of HUNTINGDON.

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners have heard, with extreme concern and indignation, of the daring and atrocious attack upon his Majeſty's Perſon, on the firſt day of the preſent Seſſion of Parliament.

That

That they feel it their duty to declare their firm determination to defend the ſacred Perſon of their Sovereign; and to preſerve entire the moſt excellent Conſtitution of this country.

That, deeply alarmed at the ſeditious proceedings of certain tumultuous aſſemblies, they humbly pray the Honourable Houſe to take the ſame into its moſt ſerious conſideration; and they fervently hope that the wiſdom of Parliament will enact ſuch ſalutary laws as may prevent, in future, a repetition of ſuch atrocious offences.

Reſolved, That his Grace the Duke of Mancheſter be requeſted to ſign the Petition to the Houſe of Commons, as Chairman of the Meeting.

Reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Mancheſter, for having aſſembled the County together on this occaſion, and for his impartial and proper conduct in the Chair.

Reſolved, That this Meeting do return Thanks to the Earl of Sandwich, and William Fellowes, Eſq. for propoſing a Petition to Parliament, ſo welcome to the County of Huntingdon.

Reſolved, laſtly, That the proceedings of the Meeting be publiſhed in the True Briton, the Times, the Sun, and the St. James's Chronicle; and alſo in the Cambridge, Northampton, and Stamford Papers.

Signed at the requeſt of the Meeting, with one diſſentient voice only,

MANCHESTER, Chairman.

MEETING IN GROCER's HALL.

THE moſt extraordinary ſcene we ever witneſſed was exhibited yeſterday in this place. It is ſo much the trick of political parties to revile the Meetings which are againſt them, that we deſire no more credit to our account of what paſſed in Grocer's Hall, than as it ſhall correſpond with the obſervation of every impartial man who was preſent. In our mind, the Meeting gave the moſt deciſive proof of the change of ſentiment which has taken place in the city of London; for if the body of wealth, influence, and commercial rank, who came forward to draw a line of diſtinction between the rich and the poor, and to hold up a declaration, the true meaning of which was, that property only is to be regarded in popular diſcuſſion, could not aſſemble ſo powerful a body even of their followers, as to bid defiance to the ſenſe of the people at large; but that they were obliged to have recourſe to ſhifts that would have even diſgraced George Roſe, in the manœuvring of a Hampſhire Borough, we may fairly ſay, that even the monied Ariſtocracy of London can no longer ſupport the Miniſter in his abhorrent ſyſtem. The reader ſhall judge of the truth of this obſervation by the facts which we defy any man to contradict.

Before twelve o'clock, Grocer's-alley was crowded from the gate of the Hall to the Poultry, waiting for admiſſion. When the doors were opened, the company found that the Hall had been nearly half filled by the back doors, and windows of private houſes in the Old Jewry; and upon enquiring, it was found, that thoſe perſons only had been admitted by thoſe avenues whoſe names were previouſly known to the Committee, and who had received directions to come in that way. Such was the ſagacious arrangement that had been made!

Notwithſtanding this unworthy ſtratagem, the number of perſons who deſired to have a fair diſcuſſion even in the Hall, while many hundreds were totally excluded, was ſo large, that conſiderable difficulty aroſe about calling a gen-

Gentleman to the Chair; the one fide vociferating for Mr. Bofanquet, the other for Mr. Alderman Pickett. The party who had taken poffeffion of the Hall by the back door had the Huftings, and Mr. Bofanquet was feated in the Chair, in which the other party, trufting to his candour, acquiefced.

Mr. Bosanquet opened the bufinefs, by ftating that the perfons who had figned the Advertifement, requefting the prefent Meeting to be held upon this occafion, would probably never have come forward in this manner, had it not been for a Meeting at the Paul's-Head Tavern, in Cateaton-ftreet, purporting to be a Meeting of the Bankers, Merchants, and Traders of the city of London. It appeared neceffary however, to remove the impreffion which that Meeting, and the Petition which they had been on, might produce upon thofe who trufted to its title, and imagined it fpoke the fentiments of the perfons by whom it bore to be prefented. He faid, he would not have joined in calling the prefent Meeting for the difcuffion of political queftions, as experience had fhown, that tumult and confufion was the confequence of numerous affemblies But the proceedings of the body of men to whom he alluded had induced him, and the Gentlemen who had concurred in calling the Meeting, to appear and declare that they difapproved of thefe proceedings, and entertained different fentiments. He believed there would be no difference of opinion on the propriety of fome Declaration, the only queftion would be concerning the nature of it. The Declaration which had been prepared was meant, not to dictate to the Meeting, but to fhew the views of thofe who had called it, and it bore to be the Declaration only of the perfons who were to fubfcribe it. He lamented the neceffity of the times, which demanded even a temporary furrender of the fmalleft privileges of Englifhmen; yet the continued attempts of defigning men, and Seditious Meetings, to alienate the minds of the People from the eftablifhed Conftitution, required the adoption of fome extraordinary meafures to counteract and defeat their operations. The Declaration expreffed a fenfe of this neceffity, but it alfo expreffed that firm attachment to the liberties of the country which ought always to characterife Britons.

The Declaration was then read, and expreffed the difapprobation the Meeting entertained of the proceedings of the perfons at the Paul's Head Tavern, and the fenfe of the Meeting of the neceffity of fome temporary meafures for the fuppreffion of Seditious Meetings; their confidence in the wifdom of the Legiflature, and that fuch regulations only would be adopted as were at once requifite for the fafety of the State, and confiftent with the liberty of the People.

As foon as Mr. Bofanquet had concluded, a general call was made for the queftion, and no Gentleman was permitted to fpeak. In the midft of the uproar, the queftion was put to a fhew of hands, and declared by the Chairman to be carried in the affirmative. This was loudly and peremptorily denied, and for near a quarter of an hour there was a general demand of a divifion. "Let thofe who are for the queftion remain in the Hall, and thofe who are againft it go forth to the Court-yard, and let Tellers be appointed," was demanded by the friends of fair difcuffion, but this was pofitively and clamoroufly refufed; and the Chairman, after again declaring the queftion carried, and that the purpofe for which the Meeting was called being over, he would adjourn, quitted the Chair.

Mr. Alderman Pickett in vain endeavoured to be heard. The party in poſſeſſion of the Huſtings would ſuffer nothing to be heard, and in this kind of tumult they moved Thanks to the Chairman.

The Gentlemen who had called the Meeting, with the Wardens of the Hall, were appointed a Committee to ſuperintend the ſigning of the Declaration, which was to lie at the Hall for that purpoſe.

In the Court-yard there were hundreds, who, as we ſtated, had been prevented from entering the Hall, were now joined by thoſe who had been in it. Mr. Waithman conciſely reported the unhandſome proceeding, and aſſured them, that notwithſtanding the expedient, the majority was decidedly againſt the Addreſs, and that knowing the fact, they had not dared to put it fairly to the teſt of a diviſion. The Company then came to a firm Reſolution againſt the two ſanguinary Bills, and a Declaration confirming the Addreſs for the removal of Miniſters, as voted at the Paul's Head Tavern.

Such was the iſſue of the Meeting at Grocer's Hall: ſuch was the concluſion of a Meeting called by the moſt opulent men in the City of London, in a way the moſt extraordinary that ever Meeting was called; ſince they deſired thoſe only to come who agreed with them in ſentiment; and it is a curious fact, that ſeveral of the men who ſigned the Advertiſement had actually attended the Meeting at the Paul's Head Tavern, and had done every thing in their power to carry Reſolutions different from thoſe which were adopted there. Having failed in this, they followed the model of Lord Hood, and proteſted againſt a Meeting which they could not govern. If this fact be denied we will name the perſons.

GROCER's HALL, *Dec.* 2, 1795.

AT a numerous Meeting of Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of London, held here this day, in conſequence of Public Advertiſement,

SAMUEL BOSANQUET, Eſq. in the Chair,

The Chairman having read the Advertiſement, by which this Meeting was called,

A Motion was made by Robert Darell, Eſq. and ſeconded by John Roebuck, Eſq. that the following Declaration be read, viz.

DECLARATION

Of the Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of London, made at Grocer's Hall, the 2d day of December, 1795.

WE, the underſigned Merchants, Bankers, Traders and other Inhabitants of London, impreſſed with the ſame ſentiments which produced our Declaration in ſupport of the Conſtitution of Great Britain made at Merchant Taylor's Hall, on the 5th of December, 1792, obſerving the Reſolutions of certain Meetings lately held at the Paul's Head Tavern, purporting to be Meetings of "the Merchants, Bankers, Manufacturers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of the City of London," feel it our indiſpenſible duty thus publickly to diſclaim all connection with thoſe Meetings, or approbation of their proceedings.

Perceiving with deep concern that alarming attempts continue to be made to alienate the affections of the People from the Government eſtabliſhed by law, and to diſturb it in the exerciſe of its moſt important functions; we think that it has become neceſſary for Parliament to adopt meaſures for the pro-

protection of his Majesty's Person, and the more effectual preservation of the public peace.

We lament that the disposition of the times should call upon Britons to resign, even for a short period, the smallest portion of that liberty, which in this country forms the distinguished privilege of the subject, and the great object of Government itself. We trust therefore, that the Legislature (and we have full confidence in its wisdom) will adopt such restrictions only, as the urgency of the case demands; that as the danger arises from the times, the remedies also will be temporary, and that while Parliament strengthens the security, it will respect the Liberties of the People.

Under these considerations, we here make this public Declaration of our determined resolution, "to support, by every means in our power, the ancient and most excellent Constitution of Great Britain, and a Government by King, Lords, and Commons; and to exert our best endeavours to impress on the minds of those connected with us a reverence for, and a due submission to the laws of their country, which have hitherto preserved the Liberty, protected the Property, and increased the Enjoyments of a free and prosperous People." Which having been read,

Resolved, by a great Majority, That this Declaration be approved, and be subscribed by all such Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and other Inhabitants as may approve thereof, and that it do lie at this Hall for Signature.

Resolved, That every person who shall sign the Declaration be desired to add his place of abode and description.

Resolved, That the Master and Wardens of the Grocer's Company, together with Samuel Bosanquet, Esq.

Right Hon. Thomas Harley,
Sir Charles Pole, Bart.
Sir James Sanderson, Bart.
Sir Richard Neave, Bart.
William Alban, Esq.
John William Anderson, Esq.
Thomas Bainbridge, Esq.
Thomas Boddington, Esq.
William Bosanquet, Esq.
Alexander Champion, Esq.
Abel Chapman, Esq.
Joseph Cotton, Esq.
Thomas Dea, Esq.
Joseph Denison, Esq.
George Dorrien, Esq.
Richard Down, Esq.
Joseph Fletcher, Esq.
Daniel Giles, Esq.
George Grote, Esq.
John Harman, Esq.
Jeremiah Harman, Esq.
Robert Hunter, Esq.
John Pooley Kensington, Esq.
Edward Kensington, Esq.
Beeston Long, Esq.
John Lubbock, Esq.
William Manning, Esq.
Job Mathew, Esq.
John Mellish, Esq.
William Mellish, Esq.
Arnold Mello, Esq.
Isaac Minet, Esq.
Thomas Parry, Esq.
René Payne, Esq.
John Puget, Esq.
William Raikes, Esq.
Thomas Raikes, Esq.
John Read, Esq.
Edward Simeon, Esq.
John Smith, Esq.
Alexander Hendras Sutherland, Esq.
Samuel Thornton, Esq.
Godfrey Thornton, Esq.
John Whitmore, Esq.
William Whitmore, Esq.
Mark Weyland, Esq.

being the names of those Gentlemen who have stood forward to call this meeting, be a Committee to attend the signing of this Declaration, and they

are

are hereby requested to cause the same to be published in the Newspapers, and in any other manner they may think advisable.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Master, Wardens and Committee of the Grocer's Company, for the very polite and friendly manner in which they have afforded the use of the Hall, for the meeting this day.

A motion was made and seconded, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his firm, upright and impartial conduct in the business of this day.

The Chairman left the chair, when the said motion was agreed to.

The Chairman having resumed the Chair, the Meeting was adjourned.

SAMUEL BOSANQUET, Chairman.

N. B. The Declaration will lie for signatures at Grocer's Hall until Saturday next, from ten in the morning until four in the afternoon of each day.

[This Declaration was afterwards published in a pamphlet, with the signatures, amounting to 5718 names.]

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 2.

MR. FOX presented a Petition against the Bills from the Mayor and Corporation of Nottingham. Also another, signed by the Inhabitants of Nottingham, to the number of 1,600, to which were subjoined, the names of about 300 other persons who were not Inhabitants of Nottingham, but resided in the neighbourhood.—Ordered to lie on the table.

SIR W. HEATHCOTE presented a Petition from the Freeholders of the County of Southampton, in favour of the Bills, which was ordered to lie on the table.

MR. NOEL EDWARDS was desirous of addressing a few words to the House, previous to his offering a Petition, which he then held in his hand. At the commencement of this war he stated, that his opinions and principles led him to vote in the minority against it. About that period the Association commenced, of which Mr. Reeves was Chairman, and of which, as he had always disapproved, he did not become a Member. Nearly at the same time another Society was instituted, for the purpose, as it was expressed, of protecting the Liberty of the Press. At the first Meeting of this Society he attended; and, contrary to his expectations, was voted into the chair. Some Resolutions were then shewn him, to one of which he objected; and it being altered according to his wishes, he took the chair of the Meeting. Previous to the Resolutions being put, he thought it proper to address a few observations to them; in which, when he expressed his abhorrence, and represented the dangerous

dangerous tendency of the Rights of Man, as maintained by Mr. Paine, he perceived that his remarks upon the ſubject were received with a pretty general hiſs, which gave him a very unfavourable opinion of the principles and diſpoſition of the aſſembly. He had afterwards received a letter from Philadelphia, addreſſed to him, "Citizen Edwards," and encloſing a moſt wild and abſurd pamphlet. He alſo received a letter from a Society of the Friends of the People in Scotland, with whom he was perfectly unacquainted, in which they thanked him for his concurrence in the ſentiments of the Meeting at which he preſided, and exhorted him to ſupport any meaſures they might propoſe. In vindication of his character and reputation, he thought it neceſſary then to publiſh a vindication of his conduct. Reſpecting the preſent Petition, he ſaid, that it was agreed to with the greateſt unanimity by a Meeting of the Freeholders of the county of Rutland, convened by the Sheriff, at the requeſt of himſelf and others. He then preſented the Petition, which expreſſed its ſatisfaction at the happy eſcape of his Majeſty, and prayed the Houſe to take meaſures to prevent ſuch outrages in future.

Mr. Fox wiſhed to be informed whether any thing of the Bills then before the Houſe was included in the requiſition made to the Sheriff?

Mr. Edwards replied, that he mentioned in the requiſition nothing more than an Addreſs to his Majeſty.

Mr. Secretary Dundas preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Glaſgow and Newark, in favour of the Bills; alſo a ſimilar Petition from the Magiſtrates and Town Council of Port Glaſgow and Greenock.

The Petitions were all ordered to lie on the table.

THURSDAY, DEC. 3.

Mr. Egerton preſented a Petition from Cirenceſter againſt the Bills, which was ordered to lie on the table.

The Master of the Rolls apologized for introducing any irregular matter, but he wiſhed to make one or two obſervations upon the Petition which he had preſented from the Inhabitants and viſitors of Bath in favour of the Bills. He confeſſed that that Petition had not been voted at a Meeting called for the expreſs purpoſe, but he denied that it had been ſurreptitiouſly obtained. On the ſubject of Petitions he informed the Houſe that it was his intention to make ſome motion upon a future day. Petitions, he was of opinion, ought to come from perſons not only ſigning their

names but their places of abode—at preſent they were mere bits of parchment which had names inſcribed upon them.

Mr. Francis aſked to which of the Petitions that had been preſented from Bath, the Maſter of the Rolls meant to apply his obſervations?

The Master of the Rolls replied, that he meant merely to ſtate that the Petition which he had preſented had not been ſurreptitiouſly obtained.

Sir W. Young highly approved of the intention of which the Learned Gentleman had informed the Houſe.

Mr. Wilmot preſented a Petition from 2500 of the Inhabitants of Coventry in ſupport of the Convention Bills.

Mr. Barclay preſented a Petition from the Borough of Bridport againſt them.

Sir G. Thomas preſented a Petition from Arundel, in Suſſex, for laws to prevent Sedition; and

Mr. Howard preſented one from the ſame place againſt the Convention Bills, and praying for a ſpeedy Peace.

Mr. Mainwaring preſented a Petition from the Churchwardens, Miniſter, Sideſman, Overſeers, Commiſſioners of Paving, Guardians of the Poor, &c. in Clerkenwell Pariſh, whoſe names were all obtained, he ſaid, in a few hours, in ſupport of the Convention Bills.

Mr. Sheridan obſerved, that the Churchwarden and Sideſman, who ſubſcribed this Petition, were in the ſingular number, for there was only one Churchwarden out of four, one Sideſman out of four, and two Overſeers out of ſix, who eſpouſed it. Nothing could be more fair and open than the Petition which he had the honour to preſent the other day againſt the Convention Bills, from the Inhabitants of Clerkenwell Pariſh; for a requiſition was made by 24 Houſekeepers, to call a Public Meeting, a hand-bill, of which 4000 copies were diſtributed, was ſigned by 26 Houſekeepers, ſix reſpectable houſes were open for the reception of ſignatures, and in 12 hours 1200 names were ſubſcribed. Nothing could be more clandeſtine than the manner in which this Petition was obtained, for it was privately prepared and carried from door to door, where the poorer Inhabitants were terrified into a ſubſcription by the appearance of the Collectors of rates and taxes, and the public-houſes by the appearance of a Magiſtrate, who at the next Quarter Seſſions might otherwiſe refuſe a licence. In the mean time it was a notorious fact that a week had been employed for this occaſion.

Mr. Mainwaring repeated what he had before aſſerted.

Mr.

Mr. Sheridan asked him whether he would say in point of fact, that this Petition was signed in a few hours?

Mr. Mainwaring explained, when

Mr. Sheridan found that the worthy Magistrate had been mistaken.

Mr. Mainwaring presented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Staines, requiring additional restrictions for a short time.

Mr. Crespigny presented a Petition from 500 Inhabitants of the Borough of Sudbury in Suffolk, against the Bills.

Mr. Hippesley said, the Borough consisted of 10,000 Inhabitants, so that 500 was a small number of signatures in proportion to such a population. He allowed that the Petition contained the names of many respectable persons attached to the Constitution; but it had also been carried about and had received the signatures of non-residents, paupers, and children of twelve years af age. As well, he said, might the 4000 names subscribed to a Petition from Bristol, be taken for the general sense of the 100,000 Inhabitants which that city contains. He approved of the idea of the Master of the Rolls, and hoped he would have the age of the Petitioner subscribed, as well as the place of abode.

Mr. Crespigny did not present the Petition, he said, as the Petition of the whole of the Inhabitants of Sudbury, but merely as the Petition of those that signed it. He reprobated the distinction which was made in these cases between the rich and the poor, and observed that every obstacle had been thrown in the way of the Petition; that the Mayor had refused to call a meeting, and that every species of undue influence was practised to obstruct it.

Mr. Hippesley said he should be sorry if an opinion went forth that he wished to raise a distinction between the rich and the poor. He had always been an advocate for the lower ranks of life, but he thought the higher ranks were more sensible of the objects they had in view; and to illustrate this related an anecdote which was inserted in the True Briton by a gentleman of more fancy than fact, "that a poor man being desired to sign a Petition, asked what it was for; when he was told it was to remove bad Ministers. Aye, said he, then if that be the case I will sign with all my heart, for the Parson of our parish is the worst Minister I ever saw in my life."

Mr. Crespigny defended the mode of proceeding in the Petition from Sudbury, which he had just presented to the House.

Lord Belgrave recalled the attention of the House to the Petition presented from a Meeting, calling themselves Merchants, Bankers, Traders, Manufacturers, and other Inhabitants of the

City of London. It being objected to this, that there was no Banker present at the Meeting, and that no perſon of that deſcription had ſigned the Petition, it was mentioned by Mr. Smith that he ſaw annexed to it the names of White and Dimſdale: in conſequence of which, Mr. White and Baron Dimſdale called upon a friend of his, requeſting that it might be mentioned in the Houſe of Commons, that they had no knowledge of the tranſaction, and that they knew no Bankers in London of thoſe names, beſides themſelves.

Mr. Smith explained, that his obſervations went no farther than to ſhew that the names in the Petition were the ſame as the Bankers juſt alluded to.

Mr. Fox ſaid, that in coming up to his place, he happened to hear the concluding words of Mr. Hippeſley, exhorting ſome other Honourable Gentleman to move that no Petitions be received but thoſe which deſcribed the occupations and places of reſidence of thoſe who ſigned them. He confeſſed, that if any thing could ſurpriſe him, ſuch a propoſition would have ſurpriſed him extremely. A propoſition which, in its operation, tended to ſhackle the right of petition. Whenever a propoſition was made, which held out an intention on the part of Government to perſecute all who oppoſed their meaſures, he ſhould think it his duty to oppoſe it with all his might. That he had noticed the propoſition ſo early had been occaſioned by a belief in his own mind, that it was the intention of the enemies of the country to repeal all that part of the Bill of Rights which related to petitioning.

Mr. Hippesley roſe with warmth, and ſaid, he muſt again treſpaſs on the Houſe for a moment in explanation, that his words might not be thus twiſted and diſtorted from their only natural meaning and direction. There was no man who reſpected more the ſacred right of petitioning than he did; but to check its abuſes in the mode ſuggeſted, could that be to bind it in ſhackles? How this regulation of adding the place of abode, &c. could trench on the liberty of the ſubject, was above his humble comprehenſion. Mr. Hippeſley then proceeding beyond the limits of explanation, was called to Order by the Speaker.

The motion was then put and carried, that the Petition do lie on the table.

Mr. Pelham preſented a Petition from the Inhabitants of Lewes, in Suſſex, for Parliament to adopt ſuch meaſures as ſhould ſeem meet.

Lord W. Russell preſented a Petition from the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and other underſigned Inhabi-

tants

tants of the County of Surry, againſt the Convention Bills. The Petition was ſubſcribed by 6091 perſons; regular notice had been given of the Meeting, Gentlemen of great ability on both ſides of the queſtion attended; and the minority entered into reſolutions for a Counter-Petition, which obtained only 2000 ſignatures.

Mr. Onslow ſaid, that Gentlemen appeared lately to have the *cacoethes loquendi* upon theſe Petitions, but as he had not yet imbibed or been contaminated with the noxious vapour, he ſhould be brief. The Counter-Petition was ſigned by the greateſt number of reſpectable perſons in the County; he would not ſay perſons of property, becauſe that ſeemed to be an affront to the Gentlemen on the other ſide. He could not help remarking though, that delirium was the order of the day, and that the ſignatures to this Petition were obtained more by cunning than candour. Copies of it had been left at various places, for the names of any body that would conſent to ſign them, for which they were rewarded with a pint of beer. If by chance any ſtubborn moraliſt was not ſo eaſily perſuaded, he was told that the Petition would help to lower the price of bread, and bring about a peace. This proved an irreſiſtible argument; ſo down went his name, and down went the pint of beer. Thus a weak argument was ſupported by ſtrong beer. He was proceeding to illuſtrate the artifices made uſe of by a repetition of the jeſt from the True Briton about the Parſon, obſerving that the poor people were better acquainted with the Parſon than the Petition, when the Speaker called him to Order. He begged pardon; but could the Houſe call ſuch partial Petitions the rational voice of the People?

Mr. Fox obſerved, that the Honourable Gentleman had given ſuch a ſpecimen as he expected of the fairneſs with which the Petitions of the People were henceforward to be treated in the Houſe of Commons. Formerly it had been ſtated by an Honourable Baronet, who preſented the Counter-Petition (Sir John Frederic), that a majority was nothing, and the Honourable Baronet enlarged upon the reſpectability of the 2000 ſignatures attached to his Petition. Now he underſtood that ſignatures were more valuable than the *viva voce*. It was aſtoniſhing to him how ſo much could have been done with 6000 people, which was the number who had ſigned that Petition, and how ſo much beer could be given away by perſons who had no property; and if ſo much could be done in that manner, why did not thoſe perſons who had ſo much property, not only of their own, but of Government, to expend as they pleaſed, appropriate ſome part of it to ſo material an object? The Gentlemen on his ſide had been accuſed of uſing too much induſtry

 and,

and, Mr. Fox faid, he had always blamed them for having ufed too little; for it was a notorious fact, that Advertifements appeared in the public Papers, ftating, that Petitions lay at particular places for fignature in London and Epfom, and when a number of people went to fign them, they found no Petition had been left there; and it was fome time before a Petition found its way to his neighbourhood, to Chertfey.

The objection which the Hon. Gentleman had made to the fignatures of Inhabitants who were not Freeholders of the county of Surry, was another way of expreffing his contempt of Petitions from the great body of the People. For his own part, he did not object to Freeholders, though he certainly fhould have done fo if they had not been Inhabitants of the county, but it appeared, that the Hon. Gentleman did not exclude the Inhabitants from figning his Petition, becaufe they were invoked by Advertifement with the perfons of landed and funded property. The Hon. Gentleman, however, was the laft perfon to vaunt of the Freeholders, becaufe the Freeholders of the county of Surry had never fhewn any particular regard to him. He had the ftrongeft and moft repeated opportunities of taking their opinions at Elections, and he had always found that they acted directly oppofite to him, efpecially at the laft Election, where their opinions were more ftrongly marked than on any former occafion. He thought the Hon. Gentleman would himfelf allow it. Though he had attempted by various modes and circumftances to win them over to his intereft, though he was a man of the largeft eftate in the county, and of a family long diftinguifhed for hereditary rank and hereditary worth, for virtues and benevolence that have done honour to human nature, and although he himfelf poffeffed talents, fituation, and a name capable of influence, yet ever fince he had come to man's eftate, he had never found that he could reprefent the county. If Petitions did not fpeak the fenfe of the people, he afked how is the fenfe of the people to be obtained? He faid fo much from his perfonal connection with the County: he had ftill one obfervation to offer to the Houfe; it was upon what the Hon. Gentleman had faid concerning the marks of fome people in that Petition. He did not know but there might be fome marks. He fuppofed there were, but he wifhed if from the great progrefs we have of late years made in fcience and literature, from the invention of the art of printing, from the progrefs of education, and the general diftribution of letters that marks were to be rejected, let the Houfe pafs an order to that purpofe, and let it at once be generally underftood. At prefent, however, a man's mark is acceptable, for why fhould a man

be profcribed opinion becaufe he has not had an opportunity to learn to write? Notwithftanding what the Hon. Gentleman had advanced upon this fubject, he repeated that a mark to a Petition was confiftent with the rules of the Houfe, which the fignature of fome of the names to the Counter-Petition in the fame handwriting was not.

Mr. Onslow rofe to explain, but as he could not confine himfelf to the fubject of explanation, the Speaker called him to order.

Sir John Frederic explained, that the refidences only, and not the names in the Counter-Petition, were in the fame handwriting.

Mr. Sheridan hoped that he fhould not incur the cenfure of the Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Onflow, for long fpeaking, as he intended to be very fhort. The Hon. Gentlemen, however, had chofen a convenient opportunity for his rebuke, for it was not made at a time when he difplayed any abfence of preparation. He had heard that Petitions were better for their numbers, but he had never underftood before, that a ftory was the better for being told a number of times over by a number of perfons. He fuppofed, if the Hon. Gentleman had not been called to order, that by turns they fhould have been entertained all night, by the Gentlemen on the other fide, with the ftory of the Parfon and the Petition, and after all it appeared that this idle and factitious ftory was at beft but a second-hand-plunder from a Newfpaper compilation. There was one circumftance, however, which the Gentlemen upon the other fide feemed to dwell on moft tenacioufly, that was, that if ever any perfons wifhed to procure any fignatures to the Petitions, they perfuaded the people that the Petition was for the removal of Minifters, and there was no longer any fcruple, for the People fubfcribed immediately. He was glad of it. He was glad to fee the returning fenfe of the Nation. In regard to what the Hon. Gentleman had faid concerning property, he feemed to have fimilar ideas with Serjeant Kite, in the Recruiting Officer, who exclaims, "A man's opinion is good for nothing, unlefs he's fix foot high,"--according to which ftandard he was obliged to confefs the Hon. Gentleman would have a very little claim. In regard to this Petition, it was certainly three times higher in the ftrength of its opinion, than the other, becaufe it contained three times the number of fignatures, having 6000 to 2000. An Hon. Gentleman oppofite had wifhed for accurate defcriptions; he fuppofed he had taken the hint from a Foreigner, whofe name he obferved in a Petition, which he begged the Clerk to read.

The Clerk read "Alexander Robert Dupont, Proprietaire et Fidele Sujet du Roi d'Angleterre."

MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS presented a Petition from Kidderminster, in support of the Convention Bills, and MR. FOLEY one from the same place against them.

MR. FOX presented one against them from 6000 of the inhabitants of Halifax, in Yorkshire. With regard to the propriety of its being presented by one of the Members of the County, as one of them disagreed with the Petitioners on the necessity and principle of the Bills, he was not sure whether they meant it should have been given to him, and Mr. Fox did propose to offer it to the other, if he had no objection to present it, but he did not see the Honourable Gentleman till after he had risen to present it. He added, on the authority of a letter from one of the most respectable inhabitants, Mr. John Rhodes, that the Meeting for this Petition met with some obstruction, inasmuch, that the men who carried the bills about to convene it were apprehended by the Constable, and carried before a couple of Magistrates, who threatened them with punishment if they did not desist.

MR. DUNCOMBE said, he certainly could have had no objection to present the Petition to the House, provided the language was fair and respectful. He thanked the Right Honourable Gentleman, however, for his deference; but was satisfied that it was in good hands. As to the other affair he knew nothing about it.

MR. FOX observed, that he had only received it an hour and a half before he came into the House, or he should have sent it to the Honourable Gentleman.

Mr. Fox then presented a Petition against the Bills from 13,000 of the inhabitants of the County of Suffolk, among whose names were Mr. Grigby, the late Member, Sir Robert Harley, Sir Thomas Lawley, &c. &c. &c.—It was signed in forty-eight hours.

SIR J. ROUS said, that against the Petition which he had the honour of presenting from that County, there was only one dissenting voice; and he was warranted to say that the present was unfairly obtained, and signed by school-boys and such persons.

This drew on a short conversation between Sir John Rous and Mr. Fox.

MR. FOX next presented a Petition against the Bills from the inhabitants of the County of Cambridge, and another from between two and three hundred of the inhabitants of the Town of Rye, in the County of Sussex.—The latter, of course, he said, were Householders and not Electors.

Sir F. Rogers presented a Petition from the Mayor, and seven Aldermen, &c. of Plymouth, in favour of the Bills.

Mr. William Egerton presented a Counter-Petition to the same effect, from 366 of the inhabitants of Newcastle under Line. He deprecated the former Petition as produced by the clamour of certain persons who had got possession of the Town-hall, and forced the Mayor to give up the Meeting. He stated also, that it had been signed by boys of 15 and 16 years of age.

Mr. Sheridan said a few words in explanation.

Mr. Egerton said they rung the fire alarum bell to get signatures.

Mr. Dent, though of different sentiments, presented a Petition from certain Freemen of Lancaster against the Bills.

Colonel Stanley said, the numbers were in small proportion.

Mr. Dent said, he presented it as the Petition of those individuals who signed it. The non-resident freemen of Lancaster he computed at 3000, the residents at 400. The Petition was signed by 183.

The Right Hon. T. Harley presented a Petition from Aldersgate Ward, in favour of the Bills. He conceived that an Hon. Alderman (Anderson) had acted right in refusing to call a Meeting, if he apprehended violence.

Mr. William Smith had not heard of violence at any of the Meetings, and therefore thought it no excuse. The Petition which he had the honour to present, he said, stood precisely on the same footing that it did, for it was signed by 364 persons in 24 hours, which was nearly double the number of the signatures to this, 200, that has had more than double the time.

Mr. Le Mesurier said, he was rather an old inhabitant of the Ward, and from the contrariety of opinions in it there was fear of tumult, and urged this Petition was signed by the greatest number of persons of property, while many of the signatures to the other were subscribed by persons who had tasted the Honourable Alderman's bounty during the hard frost.

Mr. William Smith had never heard before, that because a number of people maintained a contrary opinion it formed an argument for refusing to call a meeting.

Mr. Sheridan, in a very energetic manner, reprobated the idea that, because the poor in these hard times were obliged to have recourse for subsistence to the bounty and superfluities of the rich, they are to give up the free exercise of opinion. It was not English benevolence, nor was it at all honourable to Gentlemen, to presume that

that, becauſe the poor have taſted their bounty, they are to be ſlaves to their will!

MR. ERSKINE reprobated, with great warmth, the illiberal reproach of the Honourable Alderman; as if the neceſſities of the poor, brought on by this calamitous war, ſhould be made the inſtrument of ſubjecting them to the arbitrary will of the rich. He could not, without the higheſt indignation, hear it avowed, that thoſe were the views with which Gentlemen diſtributed their bounty, and that their charity muſt be the price of the deareſt intereſts and privileges of their countrymen.

MR. ALDERMAN LE MESURIER diſclaimed this interpretation of his language; and ſaid, that an Alderman could not ſafely open his mouth without being ſubject to the animadverſions of the Hon. Gentleman oppoſite (Mr. Sheridan) who ſeemed by his conduct, to be the natural and determined ſatiriſt of all Aldermen, let them ſay what they would.

MR. SHERIDAN was about to explain, but deſiſted on its being obſerved, that he was not ſtrictly in order.

MR. ERSKINE preſented a Petition from the Town of Kilſyth, in Scotland, againſt the Bills.

The order of the day, for the third reading of the Bill for more effectually preventing Seditious Aſſemblies, having been read,

GENERAL SMITH aſked, whether the debate upon the Extraordinaries of the Army was to come on to-night?

MR. CHANCELLOR PITT replied, that this would depend upon the length to which the debate upon the third reading of the Seditious Aſſemblies Bill ſhould extend.

GENERAL SMITH ſaid, that he ſhould then oppoſe the third reading of it. To that Bill he had given the calmeſt attention, and he now came prepared to do what a Learned Gentleman had recommended every Member to do, to ſtate his opinion to the Houſe. That opinion he ſhould, notwithſtanding the indignation which he felt againſt the Bill, deliver with the utmoſt temperance; and firſt it was his intention to comment upon the words uſed by the Miniſter in a recent debate upon the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act. Of that Act his own opinion had been, that the ſituation of the country at that time required it.

General Smith proceeded to read, from a Newſpaper, ſome extracts from the report of Mr. Pitt's ſpeech.

THE SPEAKER interrupted him, and reminded him that he was out of order.

General Smith then ſaid, that without profeſſing to read extracts, he would advert to the ſentiments that had been delivered by the Miniſter, in the debates upon the Bill for ſuſpending the Habeas Corpus Act. He found it had at that time been aſſerted, "that the magnitude of the danger juſtified the ſuſpenſion—that a Conſpiracy was ſtated to exiſt; and that evidence had been laid before the Houſe." No evidence had been deemed neceſſary now. It had alſo been ſtated, "that the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act did not take away the Rights of the People." This Bill, however, did. It had been ſaid farther, in juſtification of the ſuſpenſion, "that proof had been afforded; that a caſe had been made out of the exiſtence of a party aiming at the deſtruction of the Government, and the ſubverſion of civilized Society." What caſe had been made out now?—None. The Rights of the People were to be invaded and taken away by inſinuation. It had been aſked the Miniſter when he ſuſpended the Habeas Corpus Act, where he meant to ſtop? The reply had been, that he could not tell; that if the neceſſity of the caſe required farther meaſures, farther meaſures muſt be reſorted to. The Right Honourable Gentleman ſeemed to have inſtinctive knowledge of the adoption of ſuch a meaſure as the preſent; a meaſure which ill-accorded with his former declaration of the impropriety of trenching upon the Right of the People to diſcuſs public meaſures, and to watch over the proceedings of Parliament. Of the preſent Bill his opinion was ſuch, that he vowed to God, if he were to chuſe between two evils, between a French invaſion, the French having actually landed in this country, and the paſſing of the Bill, he would chuſe the former evil. An invaſion would be immediately repelled; but if the Bill paſſed the evil would be permanent, and no remedy would be found. General Smith was again proceeding to advert to the report in Newſpapers of Mr. Pitt's ſpeech, when

Mr. Dundas ſpoke to Order. He ſubmitted it to the Houſe, whether, as the Honourable Gentleman could in ſo many ways allude to the ſentiments of any Member, he ought to be permitted to perſiſt ſo pertinaciouſly in reading extracts from a report in a Newſpaper? It was quite an irregular thing, that the debates of the Houſe ſhould be reported at all in Newſpapers.

The Speaker declared, that the remarks of Mr. Dundas were perfectly correct. It was in fact irregular to refer to any thing that had been ſaid in a former debate. The Houſe, however, admitted of ſome qualification in this reſpect. But to refer to a printed account in a Newſpaper was an aggravated irregularity.

General Smith expreſſed his regret at having drawn upon him ſuch a cenſure, and wiſhed that the word "pertinaciouſly" had not been made uſe of. He then proceeded in his remarks upon the Bill. If it ſhould be found, he ſaid, that the advocates for the meaſure had, in the ſtrongeſt manner, at a former period, confirmed the right of the people to petition, it would be a matter of infinite regret to every one that ſuch a Bill as the preſent ſhould have been adopted. With reſpect to the corrections that had been made in the Bill, he did not receive them as boons from the Miniſters, for he was ſure they would not have been made if the voice of the people had not rendered them neceſſary. Upon the full view of the Bill, he ſaw ſufficient ground to be alarmed for the happineſs, tranquillity, and freedom of the country. Perſons would be liable to penalties without knowing that they had committed any crime. The Bill had been compared to the Riot Act, and merit had been aſſumed becauſe it was ſaid that the Bill was not worſe than that act. He denied the aſſumption. In the Riot Act it was provided, that the Magiſtrate ſhould come as near as poſſible to any meeting. Why had not the ſame proviſion been introduced into this Bill? Inſtead of ſuch a proviſion, the Magiſtrate might go into a neighbouring field or highway, and read the Riot Act, and nineteen out of twenty perſons, if the meeting were numerous, might not know that the Riot Act had been read. The Bill ought, he contended, to have been divided into two Bills. There might be many perſons who might think that part of the Bill ſhould be adopted, but who could not accede to all the proviſions introduced into it. It ought, therefore, to have been divided into two Bills.

Sir J. Mordaunt roſe, to ſtate to the Houſe, agreeable to the requeſt of ſeveral reſpectable perſons of Birmingham, a contradiction of what had been mentioned by Mr. Sheridan, on his preſenting a Petition from that town. It was ſtated, that no advertiſement could be inſerted in any of the Papers for a meeting: this was an erroneous ſtatement; for no application was made to that effect, to any one Printer or Editor of a Paper in that town. It was alſo ſtated, that violence was uſed to a perſon, who circulated a handbill for the meeting; this was equally unfounded.

Sir George Shuckborough confirmed the truth of what was ſtated by the Honourable Baronet.

Mr. Sheridan contended, that what he had mentioned he had from the beſt authority; and wiſhed the Honourable Baronet would make ſome inquiry about the truth of what he ſtated; and then he would produce his authority.

Mr.

Mr. Hardinge ſaid, that he would make one preliminary comment upon what he had juſt heard from the Honourable General, partly out of reſpect for him, and partly becauſe what he had ſaid was material to a point in the diſcuſſion of the Bill then before them, which point, fairly conſidered, would remove at once every diſagreement between them, ſo as to make the General his convert upon his own principles.

The Honourable General told us "that he co-operated with Government, and with a majority in the Houſe of Commons, upon the Bill to ſuſpend the Habeas Corpus Act, on actual *proofs* of treaſon recorded againſt the Societies who had produced that meaſure."

But he would now aſk the General himſelf (or any other man of honour) if he would put his hand upon his heart, and ſay, "that in his judgment and conſcience, their tenets and conſpiracies then recorded againſt them, did not exiſt at this moment, in equal, if not accumulated force?" They have themſelves aſſerted in print, and recently too, "that ſtill their ends are the ſame."

Yet we are told by the Honourable General, that although it was juſt and wiſe to ſuſpend the Habeas Corpus Act, it is iniquitous and fooliſh to paſs this other Bill for want of ſimilar proofs; yet he muſt admit, that in compariſon to that reſtraint upon the liberty of the ſubject we are now doing, what is "light as air;" and that our proofs are the ſame, is evident; becauſe the ſocieties exiſt, and have not only never diſclaimed, but have in explicit, though general, terms affirmed their adherence to that original ſyſtem, which Parliament has branded with a juſt character of treaſon.

He then opened his argument in ſupport of the Bill; and began it, by aſſuring the Houſe, upon his honour, that he offered himſelf to their attention, rather to mark openly what he thought and felt upon the ſubject, without reſerve, and without fear, than with a hope to impreſs it upon the conviction of others.

After the effect produced in the public mind, by a Learned Friend of his (Mr. Grant) upon a former ſtage of the debates (in the moſt commanding powers of intellect that ever enlightened a political ſubject) he ſhould have been ſilent if he had not felt an impulſe to the vindication of his own ſentiments, in language, at leaſt, as unequivocal as words could frame, at the moſt awful criſis that ever the country knew.

It was the exigency of the times, and a deſpair of meeting it with effect as the law now ſtood, or without ſuch a Bill, that made our ſafety and our freedom as a people demand imperiouſly this meaſure.

That

That it was a new check upon the right of popular discussions, and even upon the right of petitioning (by its effect upon the continuance of the assembly held for that ostensible purpose) he would readily admit, not being a sycophant in praise of the measure, but an honest, impartial, and reasoning friend.

Having gone thus far in concessions, which it would be neither manly nor ingenuous to withhold, he would proudly devote himself to popular odium, if that must be the fate of his ardent wish for the passage of this Bill into a law.

He considered it as a Bill of allegiance, framed in the generous and loyal spirit of that oath, which he and those around him took, upon their admission to the representative character and functions; an oath, which binds them "to defend his Majesty against all traitorous conspiracies or attempts," and promises "our disclosure of them to him."

Before he touched upon the outrage which had endangered the King's life, he would remind the House, and would inform the People who the King of this country is, or (as perhaps in Parliament he should express it) what he is. He is no "despot" (as libellers have basely called him), but the King of men who are *free*—entrusted with duties inseparable from the public interest—amenable to controul, direct or collateral, in all branches of his executive or legislative power—subject even to censure through his Ministers, and (which he would never dissemble as long as he had political existence himself) stripped of all claim to allegiance, if he should cancel the bond, by converting his will into law.

Upon such a King's person violence had been committed, which, as endangering his life, the law (jealous of a deposit and palladium essential to liberty, as well as Government) has made high treason, and has punished as if his death had been directly the object, and had even been accomplished.

This outrage had been treated in so manly a way by an Honourable Gentleman over against him (Mr. Grey), that he was in hopes no man living, who had ever dreamt of our law, and loved our King, would have disputed it.

He (Mr. Grey) had said, that even if that miscreant had acted without concert, and without intention, pointed in his thoughts at the King's life, he was yet guilty of *compassing and imagining the death*, because he has committed an act of criminal outrage, which evidently endangers the life.

But if the Right Honourable Gentleman who sits near him is correct (Mr. Fox) it is no high treason; though he admits, almost in the same breath, by the tenor of his argument, that it is. He admits,

admits, that if a Jury ſhould find this fact alone, their finding would be a verdict of guilt, and the guilt would be that of high treaſon. In other words, he admits, that ſuch a fact is, in legal inference, that crime. But he diſcriminates by an expedient, which an underſtanding ſo elevated would have diſdained in others. He puts the caſe, that a Jury, having pronounced the fact, ſhould qualify it themſelves in a kind of ſpecial verdict, and ſay, " but we don't believe that he had the intention to kill." This finding, it ſeems, would be an acquittal. Even to repeat ſuch an argument amongſt lawyers, legiſlators, or even hiſtorians, at this time of day, would give it a death's blow—" *Suo ſibi gladio hunc jugulo.*" To every judicial voice in the kingdom he would make a direct and confident appeal againſt a tenet ſo ignorantly and ſo miſchievouſly falſe.

To reſume the outrage, it was an act of treaſon; but committed by whom? and when? By a ruffian, who was part of a multitude in open day, and who acted in concert with, at leaſt, many others, each of the party reviling and menacing the Sovereign. At the time of all others, moſt ungratefully ſelected, when the King, as the father of his people, was in the act of preparing to animate the energies of the popular mind and will in their proudeſt form—that of a ſhare in the legiſlative power.

At a period, very little prior to this, printed hand-bills had been circulated over the metropolis, prompting the very act of regicide.

It had been truly ſaid, " that no *perſonal* connection was traced between the authors or publiſhers of theſe hand-bills, and thoſe who committed the outrage of attempting the meaſure which they recommended." But was it better for the public, that inſtead of a conſpiracy in two parts of the ſame concerted plan, we ſhould have *two* detached conſpiracies, and with no perſonal intercourſe uniting them? the firſt recommending, and the ſecond attempting, the Sovereign's death. Let it be two parts of the ſame conſpiracy! or two diſtinct conſpiracies! united, however, as they muſt ever be, in coincidence of time, and connection of principles.

He would now go farther back, and recur to miſchief that preceded the hand-bills. Call it here, too, the *ſame* or a *third* conſpiracy; and make your choice between thoſe alternatives! What he meant ſo to deſcribe had been ſtampt upon the records of Parliament; called high treaſon there; and called by its true name. It was a conſpiracy, that having acquired new ſtrength every day, had rooted itſelf, not in the good ſenſe of the popular mind, (" God avert that calumny, he ſaid, from them and me!") but in thoſe who hate the People as much as the King; who had acted and continue

continue to act with ability, zeal, and concert for the attainment of an object which he could not better develope than by two words fatally well underſtood: words imported from the wretched city of Paris, with an Engliſh verſion, to the diſgrace of our national character—the words REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT. In thoſe two words, and in the ſanguinary comment upon them, which had ſtruck horror into the world, he gave to enlightened men a picture which no eloquence of detail, if he could ever have commanded it, would make either more juſt in the portrait or more awful in the miſchief.

But this, after all, is a "fanciful theory and a viſion." An Honourable Gentleman over againſt him, whoſe dexterity as well as other talents (and moſt of all his wit) he had ever admired, (Mr. Sheridan) blew it into the air by two pithy little words—"*Prove it!*" His anſwer to thoſe two words could not be ſo very ſhort, but would at leaſt be ſhort enough to refute them, in almoſt as few words as any thing like an argument was able to ſelect. Firſt, he would ſay as a Member of Parliament, that upon the ſubject of remedial and prudential meaſures, he ſhould ever proteſt againſt the formality of proofs in a legal or juridical ſenſe of the term, as a mode of determining fact injurious to legiſlative policy in meaſures which, like this, if neceſſary at all, were founded upon circumſtances too well known to need proof, and whoſe exigency was of a kind that required all practical haſte. He would next affirm, that in every view of that ſolemn phraſe, which could affect a Houſe of Parliament with a general notice of the facts, they have been proved. High treaſon has been recorded againſt a number of correſponding and affiliated ſocieties by an Act of Legiſlature. It is not even denied, that ſuch have been the hand-bills; and our ſenſes have told us what elſe we could not have believed, that ſuch an outrage has in fact been committed upon the perſon of the King. But, in the ſame two little words, infinite fallacy was covered. It was true (and this was the fugitive cry of the moment), that no proof has been or could be adduced as the law now ſtood, ſo as to puniſh the conſpirators, or avert the continuance of their projects. Upon the deſpair of that proof ſtood the Bill, and ſtood upon a rock.—"*Prove it?*" Yes—"I *will* prove it, (ſaid Mr. Hardinge) if you give to me this Bill. The executive arm ſhall be my agent for the purpoſe of that proof; it ſhall puniſh or prevent, or ſhall take upon itſelf the miſchief." His Learned Friend whom he had already cited (Mr. Grant), had well ſaid, "what is *your* opinion of theſe doctrines and of their practices, *we* have told ye *ours*." To this appeal we had received prevaricating anſwers, and the Right Honourable Gen-

tleman had gravely obferved, like Scrub in the comedy, that, " fome of them faid one thing and fome another." He called upon them to give their fentiments upon the mifchief, to admit or deny it as a fact; and if it fhould be admitted by themfelves, to co-operate in the difcuffion of the beft remedial policy, that could meet or prevent that mifchief. He called upon them, in the name of the Commons and people of England, but feared that he fhould call upon them in vain. We are told, " the laws are able to correct and fupprefs the evil." If they are, I, faid Mr. Hardinge, am an enemy to this Bill, and amended as it is in effential parts, I would oppofe it as innovating at leaft in form, or in its poffible abufe upon facred and eftablifhed rights—In other words, he undertook, and there he took upon himfelf the burden of proof, to demonftrate the neceffity arifing from the impotence of all exifting checks, or of any but thofe which the Bill impofed. What the inadequacy of law thus imputed was, he would mark, to the conviction of thofe who heard him, in a very few words: Firft, there is no legal power to compel notice of the meeting, and an open allegation of the oftenfible purpofe. This defect of the law enabled fedition to convene itfelf abruptly, in purfuance of fecret arrangement for that purpofe amongft the confederates. In the next place, as the law now ftands, no Magiftrate has the legal power of accefs to the interior of the meeting, to the fountain-head of the mifchief in the oracles of fedition. He may now be excluded as an impertinent goffip, who obtruded himfelf as a mere fpy upon the liberty of popular difcuffions. Thirdly, The mafk of the oftenfible purpofe could baffle, as the law now ftood, any general fufpicion or grounds of alarm; fuch a mafk would no longer be of any avail. It would be torn off by the detected perverfion of the colourable object. Fourthly, there is no legal power to difperfe the meeting, if the language is inflammatory, but without external outrage or tumult. It was to mifchiefs like thefe that a remedy was claimed, and if the remedy adopted in this Bill were not commenfurate, or ftrayed an inch too far, it was tyranny, and perhaps a worfe mifchief in itfelf. He had liftened attentively to arguments arifing from two fources, both of them invidious, and yet both of them as manly as they were juft, againft a pending law of reftraint upon the liberty of the fubject; he would ftate them fairly, and watch the extent of them. " Let a meeting be duly convened—the Magiftrate, with no pretence for fufpicion, intrudes himfelf. This very intrufion is of itfelf a check upon freedom of debate;—let the meeting be affembled *bona fide*, and fingly to difcufs the Reform of Parliament, or fomething of that nature;—let the Magiftrate, paid by Government, as in

in Weſtminſter he is, act like a mercenary in the bad ſenſe of the term; and in order to court the Miniſter beſt (as he may imagine) let him intercept, by his imperial *veto*, a popular ſtatement of the miſchief; let him attempt the arreſt of a debating individual; let an obſtruction to that legal injuſtice be made by ſome around him; let the Magiſtrate then diſperſe the meeting, and announce the penalty of death for diſobedience to the mandate of diſperſion; let him call in the military to his aid, if ſuch a meeting cannot be diſperſed by the civil power alone." Is not this, (he would aſk) invidious enough? and is not he, in thus putting it, an adverſary againſt himſelf, or at leaſt againſt the Bill? He would, however, in general proteſt againſt the calumny to which the magiſtrates who act in the metropolis had been expoſed, though he had ſtated an inſtance of groſs and ſcandalous abuſe in theory, and for the purpoſe of the argument. He would add no diſingenuous colouring to ſoften the miſchief, but yet would ſoften it by a fact, which is, that againſt that abuſe there is a remedy at hand in the controul given to other magiſtrates over theſe delinquent Juſtices of the peace, viz. the Judges of the land, who have their offices for life, and in the additional controul of Juries, who will avenge the inſulted genius of the people, and convict the offender whom the Judges cannot ſpare. But now in a balance of political evils, take the other alternative! and chuſe between them! Jacobin Clubs diſſeminating through affiliated ſocieties, openly and without fear of check, every mad principle that can degrade the head or pollute the heart. Let the good ſenſe of the Legiſlature, guarding the public intereſt, make the option between theſe alternatives!

Having gone thus far, he ſhould very ſoon diſmiſs the licence of political ſchools or lectures, and the right of inſpecting them, which had been called in two other French words (put into Engliſh) *domiciliary viſits*. Of all the inexplicable events in the political ſcene, perhaps none had ever more aſtoniſhed him, than to find ſuch a want of *memory* on the other ſide of the Houſe upon this topic. It was true, that every man's *houſe* was his *caſtle*, but was it alſo his theatre, and ſo as to exclude all interference of the executive power? Theſe, were political theatres, and made the vehicles of ſedition. Was there no other deſcription of theatres in England? And could the Honourable Gentleman over againſt him (Mr. Sheridan) give no account of them? Had he never heard of theatres for dramatic purpoſes?—If he had, could he never have heard of an Act which paſſed in the 10th of the late King? An Act which diſables any theatre unlicenſed, or play even in a licenſed theatre, which has not the King's previous approbation through

through his Chamberlain, who is no magistrate, and from whom there is no appeal? Is the cause of that restriction light in the analogy of its bearing upon this part of the Bill? Sedition had found its way into that school of morality, upon that ground alone the restriction was built, not as here for a limited period, but for ever; not liable to any controul over the "*custodes ipsos*;" but the offspring of absolute, of personal, of individual discretion and will. The Act passed the Commons with uncommon haste, and without one division, the Whigs and the Tories, the Minister and the Opposition, supporting it. Upon the several days which the legal stages of the Bill had occupied, the House was not ill attended upon many of them, divisions took place; the Minister was then vehemently opposed, and was beginning to lose ground. In the House of Lords, it was opposed by the late Earl of Chesterfield, in a very elegant, ingenious, and popular speech, which is in print;—the expressions are beautiful, and the images full of grace; but a more flimsy argument he never had seen; lamenting for the honour of the talents over against him, that he detected in their topics evident plagiarism from that work; every topic now used by them was anticipated there, and the conceit of prophetic sagacity was not spared.—"It was tyranny over opinion; it fettered political freedom, and the energies of an independant spirit; it would be of no use; it was a *dicatur*, that would necessarily end in the curse of an *imprimatur*, and would in that shape fall with redoubled weight; it was the first hint, and the liberty of writing would soon follow the liberty of speech. The laws were adequate. The Bill was unduly and suspiciously hurried through the House of Commons. The best way to correct popular disaffection, was to deserve popular esteem," &c. &c. What has been the result? It has been innocent at least, and the mischief at which it aimed, that of seditious theatres under this dramatic veil, had been suppressed. If it was a tyranny in itself upon genius, wit, and freedom of thought, where has the Honourable Gentleman lived, (Mr. Sheridan) that he could suffer its continuance? He that had an interest, as the Congreve and Wycherly of his time, (with a dash of the political reformer) to make such theatres free as air? And if theatres dramatic, in their general office, were checked upon account of this occasional abuse by the permanent controul of a Chamberlain, what shall we say of a check only for a short time upon Mr. Thelwall's political theatre, and by a magistrate sworn? Are such theatres less prone to abuse for purposes of sedition? Is the licence here under a magistrate's view less convenient, or less wanted at this time; in which not occasional, but universal abuse of general freedom,

 has

has endangered the safety and existence of the realm? If there ever existed such a thing as an argument *a fortiori*, it was in all branches of the parallel decisive here, and he challenged all the abilities in battle array against him to answer it.

Mr. M. Montague said, since he had the honour of a seat in that House, no subject had occurred which required so calm and deliberate a discussion, and to which the circumstances of the times, the temper of individuals, and even accident itself, had so little contributed to afford such a disposition. To narrow the ancient right of petitioning, by any incroachment on its free exercise in the utmost latitude, is to touch one of the main pillars of the Constitution. This was a truth which could not be denied, nor had any one attempted to resist it. It followed of course that the only justification for even the slightest interference must rest on an imperious necessity, and that the right of that interference could be only commensurate with the danger to be prevented. This principle was not more true in the abstract than wise in practice and sound discretion. For to administer with justice and caution, the duty at present incumbent on Parliament, was the sure method to make its expedient effectual, and to give vigour to the law we were called upon to enact. Does there exist any necessity for the interference of Parliament upon the present occasion? Have we a right, arising out of that necessity, to circumscribe the liberty of the people to meet for the purpose, or under the pretence, of Petitions to any branch of the Legislature? To what length did that necessity, and the right derived from it, extend? These are the first questions for honest and independent men to decide. The best criterion of the necessity arose from the consideration of the consequences which may follow from abstaining to interfere. And here he begged leave to pause, and to leave it in some degree to the minds of Gentlemen to supply that part of the argument, because it was impossible for any lover of order and of genuine liberty to have failed to gain from recent experience, if not from history, observation and reflection, a sufficient fund of ideas to convince him that some strength was necessary, in the hands of Executive Government, to repress the destructive machinations of some persons in this kingdom. Strength was indeed as requisite as vigilance, determination, and activity. He was the less willing to enlarge upon this subject, since whilst it required no amplification, and would scarce admit it, these topics had a tendency to encourage the daring attempts of seditious men, by a knowledge of the terror they had already excited. He therefore took it for granted, as he felt it in his conscience to be certain, that the

the danger was pressing, the necessity imminent, and the right of course was proved and established. But were not the laws in being sufficient to empower the Executive Government to repress these disorders? Upon this part of the argument the opposers of this Bill derive a great advantage from an imputed remissness on the part of Government to employ all the weapons already in their hands, and, perhaps, from an unskilful use of those which they have employed. Upon this head he confessed himself to be of opinion, that blame would possibly attach to them, and he must leave their justification to whom it concerned. Still he believed that the existing laws required to be reinforced, and particularly to be declared and notified by some fresh Act of Parliament, which should draw the attention, instruct the ignorance, rouse the activity, and warrant the exertions of the peace officers. The same argument of the sufficiency of the laws might have been urged with equal truth in 1780, when London was in flames, because few understood, many doubted, and none dared act on the established provisions. Upon this ground he was for a new Act, which he confessed he should approve the nearer it approached to a Declaratory Act. But the rise of new species of tumult requires new provisions, and we ought at least to be sure that we rendered the measure effectual, and that we did not stop short of security against that stormy inundation which threatens our peace, our property, our civilization, and not less than all these, our liberties. And this necessity of new provisions was the more evident from that skill which had been derived from a concerted system to make use of lawful means to unlawful ends, to pervert constitutional words to unconstitutional meanings, and to preach revolt under the pretence of reform. "Oh liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name!" was the exlamation of one who had as little of a slavish disposition as Brutus himself, or the greatest idol of the Pantheon of Jacobinism. It was—

"Licence they meant when they cried Liberty;
"For who meant that, must first be wise and good."

So said Milton, who was no Tory, when he spoke of the Jacobins of his time, and so would he say of the Anarchists and King-killers of the present moment. The present Bill, in its original form, inasmuch as it gave to the Magistrates a discretionary power, of at least a doubtful tendency, he considered as going beyond the limits or the rights we derive from the necessity of the case; he should therefore on no account have thought himself at liberty to have voted for

for it, especially as its introduction, with all the attending circumstances, seemed to have raised that alarm in the minds of the lovers of order, and the best supporters of Government, which would probably have rendered its execution weak and precarious, if not impossible. The alterations since made had done away the objection arising from the discretionary power, to a sufficient degree, to enable him upon the whole to vote for it, consistent with the principles he had laid down; while the term assigned to the duration of the Act had qualified it, as a measure called for and justified by the peculiar and eccentric circumstances of the times. But while he gave his assent to this Bill in its present shape, he could not help adding a remark on the circumstances which have attended it. It had been more than once a matter of regret to him, as upon the whole a well-wisher to the present Administration, that upon important political conjunctures, there had not been a sufficient solicitude to explain thoroughly the principles of so new a measure on its introduction; or to circulate that explanation through all quarters, so as to conciliate the minds of the friends of Government, and best supporters of the Constitution, and to evince the wisdom and necessity of the legislative provisions, or political determinations of the time: the Russian armament appeared to him to be a marked instance of this neglect. Perhaps, upon a retrospect, the Right Honourable Gentleman may have reason not to dissent as far as relates to that example. The present occasion appeared to him to be pregnant with an useful lesson to Ministers. That in the introduction of new measures, especially when they concern constitutional principles, too much precaution cannot be used to explain the nature, use, extent, principle, and consequences of the innovation. Mankind must be ruled by their opinion, opinion follows upon confidence; confidence is generated by the belief of prudence and integrity in those who govern. Where the case is new, where it touches the near concern of every one, the wisdom of the identical measure must be explained, enforced, and proved; the wisdom, which consists in the well-concerted expedient for an useful and honest purpose. Let it not be objected to him that he was holding forth a tame submission to popular clamour, or a degradation of the dignity of Parliament to a fawning observance of favour. "No," he said, "let us have that stability in our councils, which suits with the long-established experience and accumulated wisdom of so many ages. But let us study to appear, as well as to be (because it is useful so to appear as well as to be) the faithful guardians of the rights and privileges of all classes of the community. Let us be firm but dispassionate,

just

juſt when we are ſevere, candid when we are miſrepreſented, and intrepid when we are attacked. Much is loſt in private life as well as in public concerns by miſunderſtanding; half the diſputes of the world have no other foundation. Calm and clear explanation, a little indulgence to haſty miſconſtruction, and the moſt eager diſputants are friends in an inſtant. It is the ſame in the affairs and conduct of nations; let not any man conſider that the good people of England may not be miſled by even a miſtaken jealouſy, to commit all their precious treaſures (and no nation ever had greater), without rudder or compaſs to the rude waves of popular commotion; mankind are afflicted more by metaphyſical abſtract, and even diſtant grievances, than by immediate and perſonal danger, the wreck of property, and all the fatal conſequences of civil tumult. The Americans fought for what they might, not for what they had, ſuffered. I know the preſſure and multiplicity of the affairs of this great, rich, commercial, and powerful nation, which leave little leiſure to thoſe who manage its concerns; but at the ſame time I am certain that more time is loſt, and far more inconvenience is felt by ſubſequent difficulties, than by previous arrangement, and a full preliminary explanation."

Mr. Sheridan (who had riſen at the ſame time with Mr. Montagu, but had given way.)—"The Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Hardinge) made ſo many direct alluſions to me, that it could not appear ſurpriſing, that immediately on his ſitting down I ſhould have riſen to preſent myſelf to your notice. I am not ſorry, however, that I was interrupted, as the laſt Honourable Speaker has purſued nearly the ſame line of argument, and by replying to both, I ſhall be able to ſave the time and trouble of the Houſe. The Honourable Gentleman having inſinuated a good deal of blame to the oppoſition againſt the Bill, has, by way of preſerving the appearance of candour, thought proper to admit, that Miniſters have not been ſufficiently alert in checking the progreſs of the evil which it has now become neceſſary to oppoſe; and that the Magiſtrates have not been altogether free from blame, in not properly enforcing the authority attached to their functions. If this ſtatement be juſt, if the evil does proceed from the inactivity and negligence of Magiſtrates, what remedy does this Bill afford for checking the proceedings of ſeditious meetings, or the circulation of dangerous libels? Inſtead of any thing in the Bill, which is calculated to call forth their energy, and aid their exertions, it deſtroys the reverence of their authority, and oppoſes an obſtacle to the diſcharge of their functions, by placing them in a ſituation of odium and ſuſpicion with reſpect to the people, the effect of which I venture to affirm will be ſuch, that when once

once the nature of this Bill is properly explained, there is not one Magiſtrate of reſpectability in this country who will chuſe to retain the office. It has been ſtated, that in a former debate, I took occaſion to throw reflections on the characters of Magiſtrates. On the contrary, there are many who fill the ſituation, whom I regard with the higheſt reſpect; but my objection to the Magiſtrates of Weſtminſter, to whom at that time I referred, was, that they were paid by Miniſters, and removeable at pleaſure. I have to return my thanks to the Learned Gentleman for many things which he addreſſed to me in the way of perſonal civility, and which, coming from him, I confeſs have great weight. I have ſecondly to thank him for taking up the queſtion exactly in the point of view in which I wiſh to conſider it; whether the neceſſity of the caſe is ſuch as to call for the meaſure now propoſed to be adopted? The Learned Gentleman took an opportunity to pay ſome compliments to the ſpeech of another Learned Friend (Mr. Grant) on a preceding debate. That ſpeech, in point of ſubtlety of diſcuſſion, lucid order, and neatneſs of language, I never heard ſurpaſſed within the walls of this Houſe. But when I have paid to it this tribute, I muſt remark, that in this ſpeech the two main points were omitted, and that amidſt the abundance of other matter which the Learned Gentleman had introduced, he carefully avoided to touch either on the exiſtence of the evil, or the fitneſs of the remedy. The Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hardinge) ſaid, that I thought I had done much to drive Miniſters from the grounds upon which they ſupported their preſent meaſure, when I called upon them to prove it. This appeal to proof he ſeems to conſider as not at all entitled to have any weight as an argument. How the Honourable Gentleman, who, from his profeſſional habits, is accuſtomed to receive nothing as fact which is not ſubſtantiated by evidence, ſhould treat ſo lightly an appeal to proof, in the preſent inſtance, is to me rather ſurpriſing. But the Honourable Gentleman thought proper to ſuppoſe himſelf in an extraordinary ſituation; that of arguing againſt himſelf, and in favour of thoſe who eſpouſed the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion. For my part, I regarded this as not in any manner extraordinary, ſince ſuch I conceived to be the tenor of the Honourable Gentleman's arguments throughout the whole of his ſpeech, and, that however they might be directed againſt us, they were in reality calculated to favour the ſide of the queſtion which we eſpouſed. I muſt remark, however, that when the Hon. Gentleman, in oppoſition to his own views, took up the defence of the ſocieties, no doubt from the habit which profeſſional men have of alternately ſupporting the two ſides of a queſtion, he pleaded their cauſe in ſuch a manner, that, with all due reſpect to his talents, he

he ſhould be the laſt man to whom I would recommend them to apply as clients. The Honourable Gentleman objects to my ſhort call upon Miniſters.—" Prove it"—but has himſelf from the particular emphaſis, which he attaches to brief expreſſions, laid great ſtreſs on the phraſe " Revolutionary Principle." He contends that this revolutionary principle has made greater progreſs in the country, ſince the repeal of the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus; and when we deny the fact, and call upon Miniſters to prove it, he ſays that it is not to be eſtabliſhed by juridical proof. This is a ſort of proof which we never required, nor expected in the preſent inſtance. I have only to refer him to what took place on the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus; no juridical proof was then propoſed; but Miniſters, by going into a Secret Committee, by bringing forward a maſs of papers, and drawing up a report, attempted to eſtabliſh that ſort of prudential proof, which might ſerve as a ground for the meaſure which they then called on the Houſe to adopt. It is not without good reaſon I call for proof. In the inſtance to which I now allude, and on other occaſions, Miniſters have deceived me and the country, by reporting plots, which were afterwards proved to have no exiſtence, and circulating alarms, which the event ſhewed to be wholly unfounded. Firſt, a rumour was ſpread over the country of an attempt to ſeize upon the Tower, &c. which thoſe, who were the moſt active in its circulation muſt have known to be untrue. Secondly, the exiſtence of the plots, after the fulleſt legal inveſtigation at the Old Bailey, was negatived by the verdicts of repeated Juries. But laſtly, Miniſters had recourſe to the miſerable trumped-up plot to aſſaſſinate the King, by means of a poiſoned arrow, which, though they muſt have been conſcious had not the ſmalleſt foundation, they yet ſuffered to go abroad, in order to produce an impreſſion on the country, and aid the purpoſe of alarm. I have been three times deceived, and they now call upon me to truſt them without any ſhew of proof whatever.

When the Honourable Gentleman aſſerts, that the danger ariſing from the propagation of certain principles has increaſed, I muſt remark, that he contradicts the expreſs declaration of his Majeſty's Miniſters at the commencement of the Seſſion. At that time, either Miniſters muſt have known that the danger had increaſed, or they muſt have ſince derived ſome new light on the ſubject. What freſh information, I will aſk, have they ſince acquired? In what manner do they get over the difficulty of having made his Majeſty aſſert a ſentiment, which they now come forward to contradict by a legiſlative proceeding? If we are to appeal merely to the grounds of general notoriety and obſervation, I will affirm, that, ſo far from increaſing,

increaſing, the danger has diminiſhed. But I call upon a Learned Gentleman, high in the profeſſion of the law. He ſtated, upon a former occaſion, that his table was covered with libels, and that he knew not which he was to ſelect for proſecution. Will he now ſtate that he has any ſuch occupation? Citizen Lee, indeed, and one or two other miſerable publiſhers, have the other day been taken up. But does there, in the preſent moment, exiſt any ſerious alarm from the extenſive circulation, or dangerous tendency of the libellous publications of thoſe ſocieties, who were formerly ſo much reproached with their miſchievous activity? But there is another thing to which we ought to attend; the profeſſions of the perſons who form thoſe ſocieties. If formerly they preached up, that the Houſe of Commons ought not to be looked to in any repreſentative capacity, if they diſavowed the Conſtitution, if they even menaced the Throne, it was evident that they now held very different doctrines. They now came forward to petition the Houſe of Commons, to acknowledge the Conſtitution, and to approach the Throne with reſpect. If even in theſe profeſſions they were not ſincere, if they aſſumed them only as an hypocritical maſk to cover their real views, ſtill it proved, that they were now ſo far curbed and ſuppreſſed, that even if they had circulated their doctrines in the country, in order to make converts, ſuch was their experience of the character of the country, and ſuch their ſenſe of the reprobation which had every where attended their efforts, that they had now been compelled to abandon their object. The Hon. Gentleman accuſes us with a degree of Jeſuitical conduct, in ſhunning to ſtate the dangers to be apprehended from thoſe ſocieties, and calls upon us to point out a remedy adequate to the evil. I have no heſitation to ſtate to him what are my views upon that ſubject. That there are among ſome of the members of thoſe ſocieties, diſpoſitions hoſtile to the eſtabliſhed Conſtitution, I will not deny; a few deſperate and abandoned individuals will always exiſt under every community. That there have likewiſe been a few, who have ſhewn their attachment to French principles, or rather, have gratified their own abſurd vanity, by an adoption of French phraſes, I am equally prepared to admit. They might conceive that ſuch phraſes would, in all probability, become the faſhion, and tend to give currency to their principles. But what has been the conſequence? That theſe infatuated men have ſhewn themſelves as ignorant of the genius of the Engliſh character, and of their rooted attachment to the Conſtitution, as Miniſters themſelves, when they apprehended any danger from thoſe proceedings. A violent alarm was now affected with reſpect to any opinions which did not exactly tally with the particular

forms

forms under which the Conſtitution was now carried on. Such has not always been the caſe. I beg leave to remind the Right Hon. Gentleman, that he once entertained an opinion, that if a Reform in Parliament was not adopted, though the form of the Conſtitution might remain, its virtue and its energy would be loſt. A Noble Duke carried the ſame ſentiment farther, and contended, that Univerſal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments could alone reſtore the Conſtitution to its priſtine vigour and excellence. The Noble Duke, I underſtand, has ſince, at a public meeting, retracted that opinion; he candidly avowed, that ſuch once were his ſentiments, but that more mature reflection on the ſtate of the country, and attention to the events which had paſſed in a neighbouring kingdom, had induced him to form a different view of the ſubject. Such an avowal on the part of the Noble Duke was fair and manly. But were his Majeſty's Miniſters alone to monopolize the right to a change of ſentiment? Would they not allow others, who might have found their projects to be wild and chimerical, to be equally ſincere in their profeſſions of converſion? It has been ſaid, that theſe ſocieties were carried away by the example of France. May it not be preſumed, that they will be reformed by its misfortunes? Is it not reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that after the experience they have had of the calamities which certain principles have produced in France, after the reprobation which they have found to attend any attempt to introduce them here, and the impoſſibility of bringing them into practice under any ſhape, theſe ſocieties may have for the preſent given up their views? I am now convinced that the danger is much leſs than was to be apprehended at any former period, and that nothing but the danger which may ariſe from the proſecution of deſpotic meaſures, ſuch as the Bill now ſubmitted to your conſideration, can tend to revive ſuch principles in this country. The Honourable Gentleman admits the value of what is taken away, but argues the neceſſity of giving up ſome part, in order to preſerve the remainder. Upon the face of the buſineſs, I contend, that there is no proof of any danger having exiſted. And I inſiſt upon this the more ſtrenuouſly, becauſe no proof has been attempted to be brought forward. Formerly, when the Right Hon. Gentleman thought that he was in poſſeſſion of proof of which he could avail himſelf, he moved for a Secret Committee; had he been in poſſeſſion of the ſame materials, he would no doubt have had recourſe to the ſame meaſure. The Right Hon. Gentleman aſks in what ſituation ſocieties will be when this Bill has paſſed? It will only be neceſſary that the meetings ſhould be publicly advertiſed. The Right Honourable Gentleman ſays, that the evil of theſe meetings was,

that

that they were ſecret and clandeſtine. How far is this conſiſtent with the charge brought againſt them, that their miſchievous tendency chiefly reſulted from the impreſſion which their proceedings made upon the public mind, and the multitude whom they brought together? So little regard had they to concealment, that all the papers which formed the materials of the Report of the Secret Committee, had been repeatedly advertiſed in every public Paper. Mr. Sheridan here entered into a particular examination of the clauſes of the Bill. The firſt clauſe enacted, that no meeting of above fifty perſons ſhould be held, except notice was given by ſeven houſeholders, of the intention to ſummon ſuch meeting. Thus all journeymen, and others, who were not houſeholders, were debarred from the privilege of holding a meeting, and of complaining of any grievance which might particularly attach to their ſituation from the oppreſſion of maſters, or the high price of rent. At a time when it was reckoned equally a queſtion of humanity and expediency, not to mark too ſtrongly the diſtinctions between the different claſſes of the community, was it either humane or adviſeable to deprive ſo large a body of men of the right of petitioning, to exclude them from the privilege of diſcuſſing their complaints, and the means of demanding redreſs? After this Bill had paſſed, they would no longer have an opportunity of meeting to diſcuſs their particular grievances, or be able to exerciſe their right of petition.

He next adverted to the mode in which notice was required to be given of the meeting, which was ſo clogged with embarraſſments, that no Editor of a Newſpaper would chuſe to take upon himſelf the reſponſibility of publiſhing the advertiſement. As to the notice to be given to the Clerk of the Peace, it depended upon ſo many circumſtances, that it was doubtful whether in any inſtance it could take effect. The Clerk of the Peace might be abſent; he was required to communicate the notice to three Juſtices, who might not be in the way to receive it within due time. It was a mockery to pretend to give to people the privilege of holding a meeting, and to affix to that privilege ſuch conditions as did not at all depend on their own will and choice. Why had not the old modes of giving notice been adopted by means of the Common Cryer, or by an intimation at the church door? Newſpapers, in compariſon, were but modern vehicles of ſuch notices. This remark became more important from the conſideration of what was the preſent ſtate of the preſs. Moſt of the country Papers were either under the influence of the Adminiſtration, or at leaſt ſtrongly infected with party prejudices. Some of thoſe who conducted them held ſituations under Government; and could it be expected, that under theſe circumſtances, ſheltered

too

too by the pretence of a reſponſibility, which they might not chuſe to incur, that they would publiſh the notice of a Meeting for any purpoſe which they had reaſon to ſuppoſe to be diſagreeable to thoſe who were in power? He contended, that all thoſe reſtrictions amounted, in fact, to a total prohibition, and that it would have been more manly to have put an end to all public meetings at once. But allowing the meeting to be held, it depends on the diſcretion of a Juſtice to diſſolve it immediately, if he thinks the matter which is propoſed improper to be diſcuſſed. It may be ſaid, that he is not left to an arbitrary diſcretion, but that he is bound by preciſe and fixed rules. But how does this reaſoning apply? If the queſtion for the conſideration of the meeting ſhould be the diſmiſſal of Miniſters, the reſtoration of Peace, a Reform in Parliament, or the regulation of the Public Expenditure, may he not contend that theſe are topics very unfit to be argued under the circumſtances of the times, and which might tend to excite hatred or contempt againſt the eſtabliſhed Government? But it was ſaid, the Juſtice was reſponſible for the exerciſe of his authority. Might he not be of the ſame opinion as the Right Honourable Gentleman, that the diſcuſſion of certain topics at a particular time was unwiſe and unſeaſonable? For inſtance, if the matter propounded was, what had been ſtated in Petitions recorded on the Journals of the Houſe, that we are not the Repreſentatives of the People; that a great number are ſent to this Houſe by Peers, and that ſeats are openly bought like ſtalls for cattle at a fair; might not the Juſtice conſcientiouſly conſider this repreſentation as calculated to excite hatred or contempt againſt the eſtabliſhed Conſtitution? But the Hon. Gentleman ſtated, that the Juſtice came to the meeting merely to watch the proceedings, that he was to wait till he heard the name of the perſon who had expreſſed himſelf ſeditiouſly, and then what harm was there if he ſhould arreſt the perſon? Gentlemen ſeemed to think that they had gained a great point, by having inſerted in the Bill the words, wilfully and adviſedly. They did not recollect that this might afterwards be a fit queſtion for the conſideration of a Jury; it was preciſely the circumſtance of which the Magiſtrate could not judge on the ſpur of the moment. Was it nothing new that every debate of Engliſhmen ſhould be watched and controled by a Magiſtrate! In the Riot Act, the expreſſions which gave to the Magiſtrate his authority were, "authoriſed, impowered and required." In the preſent Bill Miniſters dared not inſert the word required. They were well aware that no perſon of independent character, or of right feelings, would chooſe to put himſelf in the ſituation of relating the proceedings of a public meeting; and in what a ſituation muſt the perſon be

be who is obliged in the courſe of ſpeaking to examine the countenance of a magiſtrate, to obſerve his nods and looks, in order to diſcover to what degree he meets his approbation, or how far he may proceed with ſafety to himſelf! Another queſtion was, what was to be done with the man after he was ſeized? Mr. Sheridan referred to the Riot Act, the principles of which had, in his opinion, been miſtaken when it was referred to or quoted as applicable to the preſent caſe.—According to the Riot Act, the perſon who was guilty of a treaſonable tumult was found not only in the meditation, but in the very commiſſion of the criminal act. It was neceſſary to arreſt his hands, and to prevent him from the power of doing farther miſchief. But was there that exigency, that preſſure in the preſent caſe which required a ſimilar principle to be adopted? By this Bill the magiſtrates were empowered to ſeize men whoſe ſentiments they ſhould diſapprove, and if they reſiſted, to command that they ſhould ſeparate, under the penalty of military execution. But Mr. Sheridan put the caſe, that they might refuſe to ſeparate, not tumultuouſly and riotouſly, but quietly and peaceably. On what pretext would the magiſtrate then be able to enforce the law? He need not obſerve, that the Riot Act was brought in during the time of a rebellion, when danger was apprehended, not from looſe ſocieties, but from a conſiderable body of gentlemen, whoſe numbers were ſuppoſed to amount to one-third, if not a larger proportion of the country, diſaffected to the exiſting Government, and diſpoſed to bring in a family, whoſe exiſtence on the throne had been found to be incompatible with the rights and liberties of Engliſhmen. Under theſe circumſtances, it was impoſſible to view the proviſions of the Riot Act, and not to admire the merciful temper which then prevailed, in compariſon with the bloody ſpirit which had dictated the clauſes of the preſent Bill.

Mr. Sheridan remarked, that much had been ſaid about reſiſtance. He was obliged to Gentlemen for giving him an opportunity to give his opinion on that ſubject. If the Bill ſhould paſs into a law, and there ſhould be a body ready to reſiſt, in what mode would he recommend to them to oppoſe that reſiſtance? He would recommend it to them to oppoſe in the way not of an active, but a paſſive reſiſtance. To meet above the number of fifty, to ſend for a Magiſtrate, and if they were ordered to diſperſe, to ſay not a word, but to remain together above an hour. If men had no lawful means of meeting; if they reſorted to this mode of aſſerting their right; if they kept their ſeats, would you ſay, that Magiſtrates were entitled to enforce military execution, in order to diſperſe them, or to ſend them to priſon? If they ſaid, we are ſlaves, we will ſubmit

ſubmit to any fate rather than remain in this abject ſtate of ſubjection; he put it to the hearts and conſciences of the Houſe, whether a Jury would be able to find ſuch men guilty? To have recourſe to ſuch laws was the characteriſtic of a feeble and cruel policy, equally impotent and deteſtable. It is thus, ſaid Mr. Sheridan, that you blaſpheme and violate your ſtatute books with oppreſſive and ſanguinary laws, which afterwards you dare not execute. If this Bill paſs into a law, Gentlemen will be very ſlow of taking upon them the office of Magiſtrate. I objected to the Magiſtrates of Weſtminſter, as the hired and temporary agents of Miniſters. You will then find none but ſuch to perform the functions of the magiſtracy. None but thoſe who are diſpoſed to rank as the mere ſervants of the Crown, and who think that the people have no rights, except what they derive from the Throne, who are entirely prepared to become the dependants of Miniſters, and to act as the tools and agents of their policy. Now for the alternative; ſuppoſing that this Bill does not paſs into a law. It is then ſtated, that all theſe ſocieties will go on to imitate the example of France, and to introduce a ſimilar order of things into this country. The Honourable Gentleman, however, admits that there is ſome difference of character between the inhabitants of the two countries; and what do Gentlemen ſuppoſe to conſtitute the diſtinguiſhing excellence of a Government? Not any advantage reſulting from theory; not any particular form of adminiſtration, but its tendency to produce ſouls and hearts of a more noble, generous, and benevolent texture, than thoſe which are called forth under the influence of a different Government. Gentlemen ſeemed to be afraid that we ſhould undertake the taſk of vindicating the French Revolution. Do they not recollect that in its outſet it was diſtinguiſhed by ſentiments of the moſt refined philanthropy, and the moſt exalted benevolence; that declarations of univerſal fraternity, and wiſhes for eternal union, were ſo often repeated, as to approach to a ſpecies of cant? But it is ſaid, that all the ſubſequent horrors and bloodſhed proceed from the influence of a club. Yes, ſaid Mr. Sheridan, they proceeded from the influence of a club, but it was the Club of Pilnitz. That aſſociated combination of deſpots were the firſt promoters of all thoſe dreadful ſcenes which have ſince been acted on the ſtage of France. There is nothing ſo cowardly or ſo cruel as panic. When the French found that powerful combination formed to cruſh their riſing Revolution, panic and terror took the place of reaſon and moderation. To the mild maxims and equitable principles of the early ſupporters of the Revolution ſucceeded a ſyſtem of tyranny and oppreſſion. Nothing is ſo mild and gentle as courage. On the contrary

trary

trary panic rules by panic; terror governs by terror; hence we may account for the atrocities of the ſucceſſive tyrants of France, who knowing that their throne was founded in fear, were ſenſible that it could only be cemented by blood. Mr. Sheridan ſaid, that from this example he gathered two leſſons: Firſt, that the miſeries and the ſufferings of France had not proceeded from any circulation of opinions, but from the influence of a ſyſtem of terror: Secondly, that we ought not from obſervation of the conduct of Frenchmen to judge of the Engliſh mind, and the Engliſh character. As to what our ſituation would be when the Bill was paſſed, it would be a ſtate of the moſt abject ſlavery. My Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Fox) truly and eloquently ſtated, that the proſperity of the country depended on the energy and freedom of the people; as our Conſtitution is ſuppoſed not to be ſupported by numbers, but by all. Every exertion of extenſive private benevolence, of great public utility, has been affected not by ſolitary efforts, but by great meetings. Thoſe great meetings were a ſource of the virtues of the people, and a ſecurity for the preſervation of the national character, and it was eſſential that they ſhould be maintained in their freedom and purity. An idea had been attempted to be inculcated, that the Bill had come out of the Committee materially amended. No ſuch thing was the caſe. A few trifling alterations only had taken place. Mr. Sheridan ſaid, that he conſidered himſelf juſtified in abſtaining from all interference with the Bill, and propoſing no alterations, becauſe he conſidered the whole as a tiſſue of abſurdity and folly, of cruelty and blood; it was all deformity to the eye, and corruption to the touch. With reſpect to the connection between the outrage upon his Majeſty and the King-killing pamphlet, he did not deny that ſuch a connection exiſted, but he affirmed that had not been made out by any ſort of proof. He felt himſelf called upon to be particularly cautious, when he recollected that the ſpies of Miniſters had been the authors, inſtigators, publiſhers, and circulators, of the moſt groſs and inflammatory compoſitions, in order to fix the imputation of guilt upon others. Mr. Sheridan ſaid, that he thought, in the whole conduct of Miniſters, he perceived a deſign to repreſent the feelings of irritation and indignation in the public mind, as not reſulting from their own pernicious meaſures, or the misfortunes in which they had plunged the country, but as directed againſt a perſon, who by the principles of the Conſtitution cannot err. They wiſhed to point at that quarter, in order to ſcreen themſelves from thoſe feelings of indignation, which they were ſenſible they had ſo juſtly merited. In this deſign they were favoured by the nature of the war in which we were engaged. Other wars had been undertaken

for objects connected more with the character, the commerce, and territory of the country: this was strictly a war of Kings; and under this idea, the minds of rash and ignorant men, smarting under their sufferings, might be led to mistake the proper objects of their resentment, and to indulge a momentary irritation against the Sovereign. This mistake might the more readily be cherished, as the only pretence for which the war had been so long carried on, was from an opinion that seemed to prevail in the Cabinet, that a great nation could not have a trust-worthy Government, under which it could enjoy prosperity, or maintain connections with other powers, unless it had a Monarch at its head. Ministers might congratulate themselves upon the successes of their artifices; the outrage upon the Sovereign, if it was not merely accidental, was to them a pledge of their security. They had interposed the Throne as a shield between themselves and the effect of popular fury; they employed the Sceptre as a conductor, in order to draw off from their own heads the lightning of the resentment of an injured nation. Mr. Sheridan then adverted to what Mr. Hardinge had stated respecting the licence of the theatres, the history of which he explained. He complimented Lord Chesterfield's speech against the Bill for licensing the stage, which he thought by far the best production his Lordship ever wrote or delivered. He should not, however, have noticed this trivial incident in Mr. Hardinge's argument, had it not been for the personal application it had to him. The principle of that regulation was moral and not political; in the latter view he could not conceive who was to be answerable, the author, actor, or manager. Was Mr. Bensley to be accountable for the sentiments put into the mouth of Pierre, in Venice Preserv'd? No man indeed could say, that he did not speak them deliberately. The origin of the restriction was in order to repress indecencies and abuses--- such as a man must want common decorum to introduce. As a proof that the power of the licenser was sometimes abused, Mr. Sheridan mentioned an anecdote respecting himself: on the night before the first appearance of the School for Scandal, he was informed that it could not be performed, as a licence was refused. It happened at this time there was the famous city contest for the office of Chamberlain, between Wilkes and Hopkins. The latter had been charged with some practices similar to those of Moses the Jew, in lending money to young men under age, and it was supposed that the character of the play was levelled at him, in order to injure him in his contest, in which he was supported by the ministerial interest. In the warmth of a contested election, the piece was represented as a factious and seditious opposition to a court

 candidate.

candidate. He, however, went to Lord Hertford, then Lord Chamberlain, who laughed at the affair, and gave the licence. For his own part, he deemed a theatre no fit place for politics, nor would he think much of the principles or taste of the man who should wish to introduce them into stage representation. With respect to the London stage, the fact however was, that the players were considered as the King's servants, and the theatre the King's theatre; and there was nothing so natural as that no pieces should be permitted that were not agreeable to his Majesty. And Covent-Garden and Drury-lane were the only licensed theatres in the kingdom; none others were subject to licence at all---so that point of the Hon. Gentleman's argument fell to the ground. Mr. Sheridan concluded with solemnly and seriously declaring, that if the Bill passed into a law, he believed, that it would either be the final doom of liberty in this country, or that it must lead to those dreadfull scenes of distraction and commotion which every man must deprecate, and which he would almost rather die than be compelled to witness.

Mr. Powys said, that the only question now to be considered was, whether the Bill was sufficient to meet the exigency of the occasion? It was a distinguished character of the British Constitution, that it could relax or contract its force as circumstances required. The House had already decided on the principle of the Bill, and put it out of doubt. The question now was, whether in its passage through the Committee, it touched farther than before on the liberty of the subject. He alluded, in very handsome terms, to the speech lately delivered by Mr. Grant, where it was laid down as an axiom, "that all law was, in its nature, a restraint on moral liberty." And the degree of the sacrifice must be ascertained by the necessity. The monster now to be contended with, was such as no age had procured, and for the destruction of which, no precedent could dictate rules of conduct. It was a monster which, if once allowed to taste the blood of the Constitution, would devour its vitals. He stated, that there were men of desperate views, who would sacrifice every thing to the accomplishment of their purpose, and who, in the pursuit of power, cared not how it was obtained; men who would "rather reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven." That men of desperate fortunes and character should wish to raise themselves on tumult, and to make a wreck for the sake of plunder, was not altogether so surprising; but if there should be found men, to whose exalted minds the House looked with respect, ready to countenance and apologize for such men, it was much to be lamented. A certain Bishop was said to have declared, that the people had nothing

thing to do with the laws but to obey them, while modern democrats, on the contrary, held the doctrine that they have every thing to do with the laws but obey them. He reprobated Mr. Sheridan's expression of passive resistance---observing, that the doctrine of the divine right of insurrection had given place to the more novel advice of passive resistance. He thought that the Bill was attended with much more benefit to the people than injury, though he owned that there certainly was an infringement of a very great and valuable privilege, which should not be attempted but in very urgent cases, such as the present emergency. Some cry out, where will you stop? To which he answered, where the evil stops. We are told,

"If an eye offend thee, pluck it out."

As yet we were not driven to that extremity; we might amputate a less precious member. It was better to submit to an operation at once, than let it run to a mortification--if kept from the vital parts, the wound would soon heal again. If, however, the present measures should be found inefficacious, and they had scotched the snake, and not killed it, they must recur to more adequate means. He thought Ministry rather hastily blamed by an Hon. Gentleman, (Mr. M. Montagu) for not explaining the Bill at first to the public; in fact, a Bill, when first brought in, was a mere outline, and if made too narrow, could not well be enlarged, though on discussion it was regular and consistent to contract its operation. It had been said, that the Bill would not be efficacious; he hoped it would, but thought it better to be rather under than above the full effect of any principle, as Parliament could always follow up the provisions, if required, by the farther exigence of the case.

Mr. W. Smith said, after the very able discussion upon almost all the parts of the Bill in question, he should certainly take up no more time than necessary in stating, in few words, his opinion upon one part of the measure. He owned, from the attention he had been able to pay the Bill, he felt an apprehension, that unless the effect of one clause could be done away, a very important branch of liberal education would be cast off. For, if they referred to page 8 of the printed Bill, they would see that every house wherein Lectures were given upon the Laws, the Constitution, or the Policy of the Government, upon the payment of money, were liable to the operation of this clause. [He was told, that since the Report from the Committee this was done away.] This, continued the Honourable Member, made little difference to the argument, as Gentlemen would never contend that persons should not be instructed in the Laws and the Constitution of the country; the present provi-

provision made no other alteration than this, that it was left now in the breast of certain Magistrates to determine upon the fitness of such studies, and the houses in which lectures, connected with the subject of politics, were delivered, would require to be licensed. He believed this was not in the contemplation of the framers of the Bill, but he wished it explained, as it might produce disagreeable consequences if left ambiguous. He corroborated Mr. Sheridan's observations, that any considerations of Parliamentary Reform would induce the interference of the Magistrates, whether the abuses complained of were true or false. He referred to a Petition for a Reform in Parliament, presented May 6, 1793; it was read, and from its importance assuredly ought not to have been refused. That Petition contained assertions, of which proof was offered—that that House was by no means an adequate representation, and that it was framed upon principles detrimental to the true interest and happiness of the people. Whether these assertions were true or false was nothing to the argument; they were made, and proof was offered; but he was free to ask, supposing the present Bill had then been in existence, would not a hundred Justices have been found to step forward and tell those who offered proof of those assertions, that they attempted to excite hatred and contempt for one branch of the Legislature? He had only one observation farther to make, and he only spoke hypothetically. He said, if there were an individual (Mr. Powis) who by his own merit and exertions had risen to considerable influence, who for a long period had observed a certain conduct and pursued certain objects, but whose mental optics, in the violence of a fantastic alarm, were so deranged that all objects were totally reversed; the friends whom he formerly had followed appeared to him as enemies, and those he once considered enemies as his dearest friends; the measures he once condemned he now supported, and the principles he once maintained he now reprobated; who insinuated the blackest charges against the persons he once esteemed, of which he knew them incapable, but which he enforced with an affected solemnity of manner, to conceal their real absurdity; such individuals whom he had stigmatised would agree with him, that it was quite below them to reply to such nonsensical imputations.

Mr. Abbot said, that as the House was called upon this night to express its final agreement or disagreement to the Bill, he should beg leave to state, in a very short compass, his reasons for the vote which he was about to give.

In deliberating upon this and every other important measure of Legislation, and all men will allow the importance of the present measure, there are two distinct grounds of consideration.

The

The firſt, as to the law itſelf, with regard to its principle and form; the ſecond, as to the circumſtances attendant upon the projected law, as well with regard to the aſpect of the times, as to the temper of the people for whoſe benefit the law is brought forward: and unleſs both theſe conſiderations lead us to the ſame concluſion, we ought always to break off from our work; the purpoſe of all legiſlation being, that of producing, not merely the beſt poſſible, but the beſt practicable laws for the public good. If, therefore, the theoretical advantage of any projected law is out-weighed by the practical miſchief of its application, ſuch a law ought moſt undoubtedly to be laid aſide: but if the law be in itſelf wiſe and ſalutary, and we ſee upon full contemplation of the dangers oppoſed to its execution, that they are unreal and unſubſtantial; it then becomes our ſacred and indiſpenſable duty to perſiſt in atchieving the purpoſe which is beneficial, and to diſregard all imaginary fears, whatever forms they may aſſume; anxious only the more at ſuch a time to have our meaſures and our motives the more fully underſtood by the country, to be what they truly are; and convinced, that when they ſhall be ſuffered to be ſo underſtood, no circumſtances of alarm or averſion will any longer exiſt, to check or counterbalance the beneficial effects of ſuch meaſures in their operation.

As to the law at preſent in debate, looking at that alone in the firſt place, fairly and diſpaſſionately; the principle of it is incontrovertibly good; the neceſſity of it is confeſſed; and the proviſions, by which it is propoſed to be enforced, as now amended, are ſubſtantially proper and unobjectionable.

The *principle* is expreſſed in the very front and title of the Bill; it is to prevent all ſuch meetings and aſſemblies as are ſeditious: this no man will condemn. Then, as to the *neceſſity* of the times, and whether ſuch a principle ought now to be carried into execution by a new law, let us look at the facts before us, and the neceſſity ariſing out of thoſe facts, and meet that neceſſity by treading the Parliamentary courſe of our anceſtors.

The facts expreſſed in the preamble of this Bill have been already aſſumed in the judgment of a large majority of this Houſe to be notoriouſly true; and what is more, their exiſtence ſeems alſo to be confeſſed even by the very gentlemen who affect to deny it; for in all thoſe arguments by which they daily labour to depreciate the dangers of the country, it cannot be ſuppoſed that they are labouring to calculate the value and amount of a non-enity: but more than this, in the preſent ſtage of our proceedings, the ſame facts are teſtified to us by the whole country at large; for all the various and numerous

numerous Petitions from all parts admit the facts, although they draw from them very opposite conclusions. Let us, therefore, who draw from these materials one and the same conclusiion, and who agree in the appearance of that necessity, proceed to combat it accordingly. Our ancestors enacted laws against the dangers of popular assemblies in their days, according to the guise and shape which those dangers then wore. The Parliaments of Richard II. and of Henry IV. made vigorous laws to repress the violent meetings which in their age threatened to disturb the public peace. The Parliament of Charles II. passed a statute against the like dangers, which then put on the form of tumultuous petitioning. The first Parliament which received George I. upon his Throne, promulgated a law of stronger penalties than any of the preceding, in proportion as the general danger of popular assemblies grew more prevalent. Let us, therefore, after their examples, encounter the special dangers of our own times, which is nothing less than an adverse and hostile claim by such assemblies to subvert the whole Constitution of these Realms from its pinnacle to its foundations.

Such being the principle which we adopt, and such the necessity which we obey, let us next look to the *provisions* contained in the law before us. And although numerous in their detail, yet they are substantially contained in two plain and reasonable measures. As to all assemblies above fifty persons, for petitioning or debating on grievances or matters in Church or State; if no Lord Lieutenant, no *Custos Rotulorum*, no Sheriff, no Grand Jury, no Head Officer of the city, borough, or town to which they belong, will authorize their meeting; if they cannot prevail on any of these known constitutional Magistrates of the country to convene them; then all that we require is, that they should notify themselves by Advertisement: and in like manner we require that lectures delivered, or debates held, for money, as a political trade, should also become *notified*, by means of a licence: this *notification to the magistracy is the first measure: and the other measure is, that with regard to all such meetings so notified, the Magistrate shall be enabled to prevent their becoming dangerous to the State, by interposing his authority.* These are the fundamental measures which pervade the whole. And in such measures, how are the liberties of British subjects injured? Is it an injury to any man to require that he should speak out his political opinions in the face of day? Is it an injury to any man to require that the legality of his actions shall be judged of by the Magistrate? And if this discretionary power is complained of, I would only ask, whether the laws of all countries, as well as our own, do not invest the Magistrates with discretionary powers? Does not every Justice of Peace

Peace in this country receive, at the same time with his commission, numberless volumes of discretionary powers, all of which he is bound to execute? But it is the characteristic blessing of our Constitution, that our safety, even under this discretionary power, is at the same time most entirely complete, by the constitutional redress placed in the hands of each subject; who may, as we have in our own times seen it instanced, render every order of magistracy, from the Secretary of State to the Constable, criminally responsible in his person for the wilful abuse of power; and civilly responsible in damages for an excess of his authority, even if that excess be merely erroneous. This is not a chimerical, but a practical safeguard: and by which any individual amongst us may have the judgment of his impannelled countrymen, to-day or to-morrow, against any other individual, whatever be his rank or power, by whose ignorance or caprice any one of us may imagine himself to be aggrieved.

The *duration* of this law is the only other provision of it which remains for our attention. And were this a declaratory law, or enacted against any permanent evil, as that in the Bill sent to us from the Lords, I quite agree with a Right Honourable Gentleman in his comment upon that Bill, which he opposed so earnestly, that such laws should be perpetual; because they are expedient and true for ever, or not at all: but this being professed as a remedy for a mischief which is novel in its species, and temporary, as we hope, in its continuance, the duration which we are to give it should be such as may be at least commensurate with the existence of its object, and no longer: and such is the very limitation here adopted.

This closes our consideration upon the law itself. But there remains the other half of our work, which I stated at the outset; namely, the consideration of all those accompanying *circumstances*, which loudly demand our attention, and which insist upon a right to suspend, and even to supersede, whatever might be our primary determination.

Of these circumstances the foremost is, the multitude of *petitions*, which flowing in from all quarters of the kingdom, have daily filled the House during our deliberations upon this business. Ought we to have advanced forward, in defiance and disregard of such earnest remonstrances? Most assuredly not. We ought to do, what I trust we have done, weigh the merits of all these Petitions against the Bill, and also of those in favour of it; and to those Gentlemen who have so done, the result will appear to be nearly this:

As to *number*; that now, after three weeks have elapsed since the printing of the Bill, out of the 82 Counties in Great Britain, eight

eight only have petitioned at all; four of them, namely, Buckinghamſhire, Suffolk, Rutlandſhire, and Huntingdonſhire, have petitioned for the Bill; two only, Middleſex and Northumberland, againſt it; the other two, Surry and Hampſhire, have ſent us Petitions and Counter-Petitions. Almoſt all the great Cities and Towns which have ſpoke out, are divided in opinion; ſuch are London, Weſtminſter, Southwark, Edinburgh, Glaſgow, Liverpool, Mancheſter, and both the Newcaſtles; the remainder of the contending liſts is ſwelled with names of places, however reſpectable, yet of inferior note; and ſuch as, whichever way their number preponderates, cannot be conceived to expreſs the univerſal, or even the general, ſenſe of the nation. Theſe, with a very few Petitions from particular trades, compoſe the whole catalogue.

Their *quality*, however, is more important than their number: and upon this inquiry, the miſrepreſentation from which many have ſprung, and the miſconception which produced others, are apparent from their very contents. Peace is the prayer alſo of others; which, however deſirable an object in itſelf, certainly ſtands in no way connected with this diſcuſſion; but the very mention of it inſerted here manifeſtly ſhews, that provided ſignatures enow could be had, the particular object of the Petitions was not thought to be ſo very material. There is one aſſertion however worth remarking, as it runs almoſt univerſally through all of them; and an aſſertion, which of all others is the leaſt likely to be the reſult of a competent judgment; namely, that the preſent laws are already adequate to the evil. In other acts, it has been long received as a clear and wiſe maxim, that the diviſion of labour is the road to perfection: but political ſcience and legal juriſprudence, the moſt complex of all knowledge and the moſt arduous of all acquirements, ſeem to be now conſidered by all claſſes of men as requiring no diſtinct or appropriate labour, and as being rather the unſown produce, and the natural and ſpontaneous growth of uncultivated intellect, or as deſcending equally upon all men by inſpiration: and many, who probably never ſaw our voluminous Statute Book, boldly pronounce their judgment in this inſtance upon its various contents and their efficacy.

What impreſſions then are we to receive from theſe Petitions, and what conduct are we to hold? We are to receive and hear them all, collectively and individually, with the ſinccreſt reſpect and deference: and although we ſhould not find in them any objections, ſufficiently forcible to impede our progreſs; yet we are called upon to admire the ſpirit and jealouſy which our countrymen have ſo laudably and honourably diſplayed, when they ſaw us, even

for

for the preſervation and protection of their liberties, lay our hands upon the ark in which thoſe liberties are enſhrined: and we were alſo called upon by thoſe Petitions to enter with redoubled vigilance upon the labours of that Committee, in which, by courſe of Parliament, theſe meaſures were to be ſtill more fully diſcuſſed, amended, and effectuated.

At length the Committee did enter upon its labours. Out of the tranſactions of that Committee have any new circumſtances ariſen which ſhould leſſen our original diſpoſition in favour of this Bill? Some very new circumſtances did indeed appear there. The firſt of which were, the many important amendments introduced into the Bill at that period. Paſſages were then ſtruck out of it, which, had they remained, I, for one, ſhould have voted againſt the Bill moſt decidedly in every ſubſequent ſtage of it. Other paſſages were alſo inſerted, which rendered the beneficial clauſes more operative. And if all was not done that might have been done, let thoſe anſwer for it who deſerted that Committee.

But one circumſtance above all others ſtruck us all in that Committee; and the more ſo, as it was expreſsly concerted for the purpoſe of ſhaking our reſolutions. We ſaw at once a ſeceſſion of all the diſtinguiſhed talents and characters which dignify the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe; who then refuſed to the Houſe, and to the nation at large, the benefit of their ſervices in meliorating the law which they profeſſed to think tyrannically ſevere, and which, nevertheleſs, they were willing ſhould be left ſo to bind their Conſtituents. We cannot forget, that upon this occaſion one Honourable Gentleman, however, could not prevail upon himſelf to leave the Houſe, until he had given us the alarming conſolation and proſpect of a permanent ſitting at Copenhagen-Houſe, contemporaneous, if not co-ordinate with our own Seſſion in Parliament. Neither can we forget, that a Right Honourable Gentleman, who ſtiles himſelf peculiarly the Servant of the People, and whoſe public ſervices all ranks of men agree in deſcribing as eminently meritorious and illuſtrious, profeſſed that the motive for his dereliction of duty upon that Committee was, becauſe he thought the Bill too bad to be amended: and yet, in the only inſtance where his violent averſion to the Bill prompted him to point out a ſpecific objection, that objection was inſtantly followed, and remedied, by an amendment. Granting, however, that his motive was truly ſuch as he avows, yet I believe the diſcovery has been reſerved for himſelf, that "*to deſpair of the State* is a political virtue." But if the People of England ſhould conceive that the true motive for this ſeceſſion was to promote a party manœuvre, and for the purpoſe

of

obtaining the remote contingency of a political triumph over a political rival, they will then demand at his hands an account of every particle of loſs ſuſtained, and every diminution of their rights incurred, by this voluntary abandonment of his poſt; and they will think that, by thus ſacrificing their liberties, he has very little entitled himſelf to the national gratitude.

One word more, Sir, before I releaſe this Houſe from the trouble of hearing me any longer; for there yet remains one circumſtance more; and it is the laſt ingredient in our deliberation; but it is of ſuch moment, that I cannot hide it from my own ſight; and it behoves the country to look to it ſtedfaſtly.

A ſhort, but momentous, queſtion. *Will our law, if paſſed, be obeyed?* We all know, Sir, that as an extreme caſe, as a theoretical propoſition, as an hypothetical ſpeculation, and as the ultimate termination of all diſquiſitions on the forms of eſtabliſhed Government, we find ſtated, as one mode of their diſſolution, *reſiſtance:* and happily, Sir, ſince the æra of our Revolution, this propoſition has been deemed merely a ſpeculative queſtion in this country. Towards the end of the late Scottiſh Parliament, the great leader of the patriotic party, (Andrew Fletcher, of Saltoun) a man of an ardent ſpirit, and who had himſelf borne arms in the cauſe of liberty, even at that criſis, when the ſeverance of the two Crowns was in view, ſtated to the Scottiſh Parliament, what to me has ever appeared the wiſeſt maxim upon this perilous doctrine: "That it were to be wiſhed, that all Governments ſhould think reſiſtance lawful, and all ſubjects ſhould think it unlawful." Even he, and at ſuch a criſis, would not ſtate a bolder propoſition to the Parliament of his country. But in our times we have heard more; we have, even within theſe walls, heard that which heretofore was only theoretical now ſtated practically. One of the three Honourable Gentlemen, who in the courſe of theſe debates came forward with this language, (Mr. Grey) did on the very night following qualify his firſt declarations, and explain his meaning to be ſtill merely theoretical. And another of the Honourable Gentlemen, (Mr. Sheridan) equally uncalled upon, has this night produced alſo his commentary upon his former declarations, and has limited his advice to paſſive reſiſtance. Singular indeed in this article, for his coincidence with another diſtinguiſhed public character, (Mr. Horne Tooke) who had already recommended the ſame idea, and deſcribed it as "the reſiſtance of the anvil to the hammer." But it muſt ever live in our memory, for the words ſunk deep into our minds, that the Right Honourable Gentleman, whoſe words are ſtill unexplained, (Mr. Fox) did openly declare, "that if theſe laws ſhould be ratified by the Royal ſceptre,

and the People of England ſhould afterwards aſk of him what they ought to do? he would tell them; "*It is no longer a queſtion of duty, it is no longer a queſtion of moral obligation; it is a queſtion of mere prudence alone, whether you ſhould obey or reſiſt.*" To that declaration, Sir, we in a few hours had an echo at our doors; the London Correſponding Society publiſhed their Manifeſto, and all but laid it on your Table."

Sir, I endure the painful taſk of repeating theſe words, only to ground a repreſentation to that Right Honourable Gentleman who ſo ſpoke; and I conjure him to ſpeak out again, in terms not ambiguous, not oracular, but plainly and diſtinctly; "Whether now, if theſe laws, amended as they are, ſhall be paſſed, he will again repeat his ſignal to the inquiring People of England, and bid them unfurl the ſtandard of rebellion?"

It is moſt highly important to the country that this queſtion ſhould be now anſwered. Not that I think we ſhould be driven by any dread of its conſequences, whatever they may be, from the diſcharge of our duty; but the prevention of thoſe very conſequences would, in the judgment of moſt men, render theſe Bills ſtill more neceſſary.

Mr. Fox ſaid, he was called upon in a very polite and civil, but at the ſame time in a very unparliamentary manner in that Houſe, to account for his conduct. The Honourable Gentleman might have taken notice of the whole that he had ſaid on a former night. He would then have afforded him an opportunity of reſtating his words if they had been miſconceived; upon all this he had no particular complaint to make; he ſhould only ſay, that the practice of attacking a Member of Parliament for what he ſaid on former occaſions, in this general manner, was wholly new in the courſe of parliamentary debates. That any individual Member, for he made a difference between ſuch a character and a Member of his Majeſty's Council, ſhould be thus called to account, was very extraordinary, and what the Honourable Gentleman, when he had taken more pains to become acquainted with the uſages of the Houſe, whatever abilities he might diſplay in the ſpeech, and however politely he might conduct himſelf, would not frequently practiſe. Indeed there was hardly any part of the ſpeech of that Honourable Gentleman which in former times would have been ſuffered to be delivered in that Houſe. He wiſhed to know whether it would be of advantage to the proceedings of that Houſe, that the ſentiments of every individual, and every part of his parliamentary conduct, ſhould be the ſubjects of particular debates in that Houſe, unleſs part of that conduct was ſuch as called for the particular cognizance of the Houſe? He knew there

there was a ſpecies of artifice, of which he did not accuſe the Honourable Gentleman, to call on individuals on advanced ſtages of debates upon a Bill, to explain what they had formerly ſaid, and this was done with a view of making it impoſſible to have a fair debate. This he had experienced more than once, but he hoped he poſſeſſed a temper that was not to be diſcompoſed by ſuch an artifice, and at the ſame time not to be damped by any ſpecies of catechiſm. The Honourable Gentleman aſked him queſtions with regard, not only to expreſſions which he had uſed on a former debate, but alſo with regard to his former conduct, and he ſeemed to think he had a right to know why he did not attend the Committee on the preſent Bill—He thought he had told that Honourable Gentleman and the Houſe already his reaſon for his non-attendance. He would repeat it. It was becauſe the principle of the Bill was ſo deteſtable, ſo radically vicious, and ſo dangerous to the Conſtitution of this country, that he believed it to be impoſſible to amend it to any good purpoſe. He did not wiſh to gild a pill which contained in its eſſence ſuch a noxious medicine. He wiſhed to ſpeak plainly upon ſuch a ſubject, and he ſcorned to defend himſelf by any ſpecies of garbled explanation. He believed that he was not ſingular, nor were thoſe with whom he acted ſingular, in abſtaining from the Committee upon this Bill. He would aſk Gentlemen who were ſo forward to put queſtions to him upon this occaſion; nay, he would aſk thoſe who were the moſt forward to countenance the practice, but who did not chooſe to come forward themſelves with ſuch catechiſms, whether they did or did not attend the Committee on the India Bill, which he brought forward in that Houſe? Whether they had attempted in a Committee to gain ſomething in that Bill for the Eaſt-India Company? It was well known they declined altogether to attend that Committee. Why? They ſtated, that they conceived the principle of the Bill (whether right or wrong was another queſtion) to be ſo bad that they would not endeavour to amend it in the Committee. Let him aſk the Right Honourable Gentleman, and the majority of that Houſe, who ſeemed to have forgotten the conduct of the Miniſter and his adherents upon that occaſion, whether they would not then have blamed him if he had aſked them whether they did not think that their country would regard them as acting with partiality? But he never thought of cenſuring the Right Honourable Gentleman for his conduct on that occaſion, or of inquiring into the grounds of his ſeceſſion. He put it to the candour of the Houſe, if it was worthy of the character of Gentlemen, or if they ſuppoſed that the country would really conſider thoſe as honeſt men. who attacked the ſame meaſure in one man, which they applauded in another, merely be-

cauſe

cause he had the influence of the Crown at his back, and because he had places and pensions and peerages to bestow? In his own opinion, such a conduct reflected as little credit on their honesty as patriots, as on their understandings as men. He knew the Honourable Gentleman to whom he alluded to be versed in the proceedings of Parliament, and with the knowledge which he possessed he certainly could not be ignorant that at one time there was a regulation that no one who disapproved of the principle should attend on the commitment of a Bill. Of this regulation in ordinary cases, he could not approve, as a Bill might sometimes be amended, in its provisions, even by those who did not agree with its principle. To the other question in the catechism Mr. Fox had no objections to make as ingenuous replies as he had done to that which stood first in the catalogue. He never stated an opinion which, if he disapproved, he was not willing to retract, nor adhered to an assertion which he would not have the boldness to repeat. What he had said on the subject of resistance had been grossly misrepresented by the Honourable Gentleman; for, Mr. Fox contended, that neglecting to mention the qualifications that accompanied his assertion, was as much a misrepresentation as a mistatement of the words. He never said any thing upon this topic, which he was not prepared to defend; and what he had asserted from the conviction of principle, he would scorn to explain away from any motive of caution. To what did the Honourable Gentleman object in his declaration? Was it to the doctrine itself, or to the application of the statement which he meant to express? These were the points which every man ought to have examined, and which his political assailant ought to have come prepared to discuss. With respect to the doctrine, he expressly declared, that in his opinion not only the King may excite the people to resistance—that not only the Lords may excite the people to resistance—that not only the House of Commons may excite the people to resistance—and that not only his Majesty's Ministers may excite the people to resistance—but that the measures of the three branches of the Legislature may justify the people in resisting the Government. The doctrine he had been taught not only by Sydney and Locke, but by Sir George Saville, and the late Earl of Chatham. And if these authorities would not suffice, he would refer the House to a sermon upon the subject, preached by Dr. Watson, the present Bishop of Llandaff, which, in his opinion, was replete with manly sense, and accurate reasoning, upon that delicate but important subject. Could he hesitate for a moment to doubt of that incontestible right which the people possessed, to resist oppression, and to punish their oppressors, he would consider himself as

as a British ſlave, and not as a free-born ſubject of Great Britain? What! would they pretend that there was an infallibility in the Government, to exempt it from ſcrutiny, or that it poſſeſſed an omnipotence which defied controul? Were the old exploded dogmas of the Stuarts and their partizans to be revived at this enlightened period of the world; and were the opinions of the moſt eminent philoſophers and politicians which the country had produced, to be contravened by the ſpeculative alarmiſts of the preſent day? He hoped that there was none in the Houſe who would ſo groſsly abuſe the gifts of Providence, as to put himſelf on a level with the moſt ſervile and degenerate race of mankind, by denying a doctrine which had been held by the wiſe and good of every age. So much then for the doctrine. With reſpect to the application of it, he would meet the Honourable Gentleman on the ground from which he ſet out, namely, that all Governments ought to conſider the doctrine as lawful, and that by the ſubject it ought to be conſidered as unlawful. Without queſtioning the juſtice of the aphoriſm, let him conſider, ſaid Mr. Fox, that if the maxim be juſt, that I was ſpeaking, not to the governed, but to the governors, and that I was imploring them, not the people, to conſider the right which the ſubjects of Great Britain enjoyed of repelling tyranny by force; and when he has conſidered this, let him not directly miſrepreſent my words. Indeed, from the diſpoſition which the Hon. Gentleman had ſhewn for miſrepreſentation, he was not much ſurpriſed that he had ſhared the fate of all whom he had condeſcended to notice. Even his Honourable Friend (Mr. Sheridan) who had ſpoken in the courſe of this evening, had been repreſented as recommending a paſſive reſiſtance, whereas it was freſh in the recollection of every one, that he had only given the preference to that kind of reſiſtance, on the ſuppoſition, that reſiſtance in ſome ſhape was determined upon. But after inflicting the moſt cruel wounds upon the Conſtitution, the only reſource which was left them, was to cover their conduct by miſrepreſentation, and of this reſource, he allowed, that they availed themſelves in its utmoſt latitude. He was not a correct meaſurer of words; but at the ſame time, when his meaning depended upon the preciſe expreſſions which he employed, he did not chuſe that his words ſhould be miſrepreſented, or what was the ſame thing, partially given.

The Hon. Gentleman had ſtated, that on a former evening, he had ſhortly ſaid, that if the preſent Bill ſhould paſs into law, reſiſtance would no longer be a queſtion of duty but of prudence. This he certainly ſaid, but he would have it recollected that he ſaid a good deal more. His expreſſions were, that if the Bill now be-

fore the House should pass into a law, contrary to the sense and opinion of a great majority of the nation, and if the law, after it was passed, should be executed according to the rigorous provisions of the Act, then, in that case, resistance would not be a question of duty but of prudence. These were the words which he had used, and from which he would not now depart. And if the general doctrine was admitted to be true, and if it was the opinion of the country, that the Bill was a direct invasion of the rights of the subject, and a daring attempt to subvert the Constitution, the application of the doctrine could not be false. The nature and tendency of the Bill was the point at issue between him and the Honourable Gentleman; and upon this point the House was now called upon to decide. He had laboured to prove that it not only struck at the out-works and bulwark of the Constitution, but that it struck the very vitals, and went to undermine the pillars upon which the fabric rested. This he had not only stated as an opinion, but he had argued it in different stages of the Bill, and though he had not been so fortunate as to convice the House, it was neither arrogance nor presumption in him to affirm, that his arguments were completely satisfactory to himself, and that they never had been answered. And if the House consented to any Bill, the real effect of which was to give a mortal stab to the Constitution; he could not understand how any man could deny, that resistance on the part of the people involved only a question of prudence, and not of duty, if it was at all their province to guard it from danger, or to repel the assailant. The Honourable Gentleman, however, was not content with imputing to him the decision on the question of right, he also thought fit to make him decide upon the question of prudence, a question on which he had left the people entirely to determine for themselves. He never had recommended forcible resistance; on the contrary, he agreed with the maxim—*iniquissimam pacem justissimo bello anteferendam*. There was a wide difference between moral guilt and political imprudence. When a conspiracy existed to repeal the Bill of Rights, to destroy the Constitution, to rob the subject of his best and dearest privileges, and to degrade and debase the character of Englishmen; and when there were such overt acts as the Bills now proposed to be passed into laws, in proof of the existence of such a conspiracy; the law might condemn, and prudence might condemn a violent resistance on the part of the people, but it would not be easy to convince him, that any moral guilt would attach on such a measure. The Hon. Gentleman had been pleased to accuse him roundly for sentiments which he had uttered on a former night, and which he now repeated. He would

ask

aſk that Honourable Gentleman if he approved of the name of Sydney and of Ruſſell? Were they dear to that Honourable Gentleman? Dear to me they are, ſaid Mr. Fox, dear is their very name, dear to this country are the deſcendants of the illuſtrious Ruſſell. I ſee the ſpirit of that great man this day animating his deſcendant: I ſee a man of high rank, ſplendid talents, and patriotic ſpirit, emulating the virtue of his anceſtor: I admire his principles: they adorn his character, and I hope he will be rewarded with glory. I ſay he emulates the virtuous principles of his anceſtor—perhaps, ſome people in this country wiſh he may ſhare his fate: I have no ſuch wiſh; but I have hopes when I ſee the deſcendant of the illuſtrious Ruſſell poſſeſs the ſpirit, the patriotiſm, the fortitude and perſeverance of his anceſtor, that he will be rewarded in like manner by the affections of an admiring people. But why did the people of England admire the great characters of Ruſſell and Sydney? Was it becauſe they were unjuſtly condemned? Certainly they were unjuſtly condemned, for they were condemned illegally, on defective evidence, and contrary to law. But, although they were thus condemned, was there a man this day who had read their hiſtory who did not believe they had in contemplation a reſiſtance to the Prince then upon the Throne? Why did we admire them then? The ſimple injuſtice of their execution could have reflected diſgrace only upon their accuſers, and their judges: it might have tended to excite the feeling of compaſſion for thoſe who had fallen a ſacrifice to a ſpirit of vindictive cruelty, but not to rouſe thoſe ſentiments of reſpect and veneration which filled every boſom when theſe names were mentioned. No—it was becauſe we knew they had that reſiſtance in contemplation, that they were determined to reſiſt principles which then prevailed, principles which were odious to the people of this country, much too nearly reſembling ſome modern doctrines among ourſelves: they found the law inſufficient, and they endeavoured to bring about a Revolution favourable to the liberties and rights of Engliſhmen; and if this be the caſe, the queſtion was ſtill nothing but a queſtion of the application of the ſame principle. Theſe were the reaſons why we admired the characters of theſe great men, and admired they would be while a ſpark of liberty animated the boſom of an Engliſhman. Theſe were his ſentiments, he would maintain them to the hour of his death. If others, who heard him, did not approve of them, let them take what arts they pleaſed to blacken him in the opinion of his countrymen, he would ſtill perſevere, for he knew he had pronounced principles independent of which his preſent Majeſty never could have been placed upon the Throne of theſe Kingdoms.

He

He wiſhed it again to be underſtood, that he did not mean to ſhelter himſelf under the authority of names, for he ſpoke for himſelf; but he could not here help referring to the venerable Earl of Chatham's ſpeech on the American war. That great ſtateſman had ſaid, that he rejoiced the Americans had reſiſted. A noble ſentiment; and although he differed on other points from that illuſtrious man, he would ſay, that in that event he rejoiced alſo; for, conſidering the point which was then at iſſue between America and this country, he had rather that America ſhould be independent of Great Britain, than that, by the meanneſs of her ſervitude, ſhe ſhould have infected this country with the baſeneſs of her own ſlavery. Upon that occaſion Lord Chatham had ſaid, in his own peculiarly emphatic ſtrain, rather than that ſlavery ſhould be eſtabliſhed, let diſcord reign for ever, and that old as he was, he wiſhed to ſee the queſtion tried between Government and the People. The phraſe was, perhaps, a little harſh, but the principle was excellent. He was ſure he had heard ſimilar ſentiments from the late Sir George Savile. But, after all, he would beg leave to ſay, that of all the attacks to which he knew he was expoſed, there was but one he feared, that of incurring the contempt of puſillanimity. He muſt, therefore, again ſay that, from the diſpoſition of his mind, and from the principles he had uniformly maintained in that Houſe and out of it, he ſhould be a fool if he did not believe theſe principles to be true, and a coward if he did not profeſs them. Mr. Fox then adverted to another article of charge which had been brought againſt him; namely, withdrawing from the Committee on the Bill. The motive which had been aſcribed to this proceeding was very extraordinary indeed. For how the Honourable Gentleman could make out, that he had obtained a triumph over his rival by withdrawing from the Committee, he could not conceive. Had he attended, and perſuaded the Houſe to alter ſome of the moſt obnoxious clauſes, then with ſome juſtice, perhaps, he might have got the credit of a triumph; but it was the firſt time he had ever heard that to abſent one's ſelf from a debate was the way to obtain a victory. But when he attributed his conduct on that occaſion partly to another motive, which was, that the Bill might go into the country with all its faults upon its head, the ſuppoſition was not ſo incorrect, and, as far as imputed a crime, he would plead guilty to the charge. He confeſſed that he wiſhed the Bill to go abroad in its native deformity, as it was impoſſible for any amendment to render it worthy of retaining a place in the ſtatute books of the kingdom. On the different clauſes of the Bill he would not enter much at large, after the eloquent and irreſiſtible ſpeech which

had been delivered by his Honourable Friend, no argument of which had ever been touched. There was only one or two points on which he wiſhed to make a few remarks. It had been contended by a Learned Gentleman (Mr. Hardinge), that not only meetings which were really dangerous ought to be ſtopped, but that all meetings whatever, whether the debates were inflammatory or argumentative, ought to come within the operation of the Bill. He ſaw that it was impoſſible accurately to draw the limits between one ſpeech that was merely argumentative, and another which might contain ſome appeals to the paſſions, and therefore he wiſely confounded all thoſe trifling diſtinctions, and brought both within the reach of the law. For inſtance, were he, in a public meeting, to ſtate coolly and diſpaſſionately the inadequacy of our repreſentation, and the diſproportionate influence of Old Sarum to ſome large and populous towns, in chooſing their repreſentatives, he might be taken up for ſedition; a Juſtice or Magiſtrate might diſſolve the meeting, and on their refuſing to diſperſe, he might call in the military to murder them. With reſpect to the conduct of Magiſtrates, he had little to add to what had been ſaid by his Honourable Friend. He had received a letter, however, this day, from a moſt reſpectable Magiſtrate, who held that office much to his honour, and the benefit of the place in which he reſides, in which he expreſſes his terror at theſe Bills. In former inſtances, men of different political principles have held the offices of Magiſtrates together, and forgetting all private opinions on politics, have united in conſulting the intereſts of the poor, and in forming plans for their relief; whereas now they will be forced to depart from their civil capacities to decide controverſies between Mr. Burke and Mr. Paine. In ſhort, it would be ſimply impoſſible for two men differing in their political ſentiments to be in the ſame magiſtracy. Mr. Fox remarked, that in this, as well as in all the preceding debates, the preamble of the Bill was taken as a proof of the object of it. That was a curious way of taking a point for granted; it never could be taken as a thing of courſe true, and he did not believe it to be true in this inſtance. The preamble of this Bill talked of Seditious Meetings. A Learned Gentleman had ſaid, that as to the intention of theſe meetings, he had evaded the queſtion. That Learned Gentleman had aſked what theſe ſocieties are? A pretty comprehenſive phraſe: Correſponding and other ſocieties. He had ſaid that on a former occaſion, ſome of them meant one thing, and ſome another. The Learned Gentleman had ſaid that was Scrub's anſwer. He really did not care whether it was Scrub's anſwer, or the anſwer of any other perſon, for it appeared to him to be the only good anſwer which a man of common

ſenſe could make. Where there are a great number of men, there muſt of courſe be a variety of ſentiments; and upon this he muſt refer to the obſervations already made by his Hon. Friend (Mr. Sheridan). The general principle of every ſociety he took to be that which it profeſſed. It had been ſaid that Thelwall had lately become more moderate, and that his moderation proceeded from terror of the ſtrong meaſures now threatening to be adopted. He could not ſpeak to the fact; but if it was as had been repreſented, he rather ſuppoſed that any improvement in moderation had been owing to the proſecutions being ſuſpended by the Attorney General. For he was convinced that lenient meaſures would be more effectual than violent ſteps, in ſubduing thoſe who were diſaffected to Government. Mr. Fox denied that there was any ground for the calumnious allegations advanced againſt the meeting at Copenhagen-Houſe. The meeting had aſſembled in a legal and conſtitutional manner, for the legal and conſtitutional object of petitioning; but if there were a few individuals intent upon deſperate deſigns, that was no reaſon for throwing out a general aſperſion againſt the whole body. In great meetings he always conceived too that their oſtenſible object was their real object, becauſe it was impoſſible to bring twenty or thirty thouſand people to practice diſſimulation in uniſon. He would aſk any Gentleman to ſhew him the probability there was of any perſon holding forth, in a very large popular aſſembly, any doctrine that was not agreeable to the real feelings of the maſs of that ſociety? He would aſk any Gentleman to ſhew him proof that the proceedings even at Copenhagen-Houſe were in any degree ſeditious, and to ſhew him that the meeting there had any idea of recommending an attack upon his Majeſty? The Petition preſented to that Houſe contained ſentiments of a different nature. He would aſk the Attorney General himſelf, if he knew of any proceedings at that place which called upon him to inſtitute a proſecution? What they had done upon that ſubject could not have been blamed in the bad reign of Charles II. whoſe ſhameful example we were now ſo fond of imitating ſervilely. They had not gone beyond the limits which were then preſcribed to thoſe who wiſhed to petition the King. He did not know that they had done any thing illegal, and he could not preſume the proceedings were ſeditious, merely becauſe that was inſinuated in the preamble of the preſent Bill. He knew that to take any thing for granted without evidence, was contrary even to the principles laid down in the ſlaviſh reign of Charles II. and quite contrary to all the principles of our Conſtitution. But Gentlemen, when they talked of ſeditious meetings, adopted general terms—"theſe ſocieties,"—by which they made of

of them a ſpecies of body corporate of ſedition. No, inſtead of conſidering them as a body corporate, he conſidered them, as he did every other large body of men, conſiſting of a great number of good and ſome bad perſons: and the maſs of that body he conſidered to be good. Such he had conſidered, and had more than once ſtated to be the body of the ſociety of which Mr. Reeves was Preſident. He knew, indeed, that ſome of the publications of that Gentleman, as alſo thoſe of Mr. Arthur Young, were directly hoſtile to the beſt principles of our Conſtitution, and that they had been circulated with a very miſchievous avidity; yet he was willing to allow that the maſs of that ſociety were what they profeſſed to be, namely, friends to the Conſtitution of this country, as conſiſting of King, Lords and Commons. Preciſely the ſame did he think of the London Correſponding Society. By the way, there fell into his hands very lately a pamphlet, which contained much admirable reaſoning; it was ſtated in the form of a dialogue, ſuppoſed to have been ſupported by two oppoſite characters, the one a friend, the other an enemy, to the London Correſponding Society. The enemy ſays, I hate the ſociety, becauſe it has for its object the deſtruction of all monarchy. The friend ſays, have you found any thing of that kind in their proceedings? No--ſays the other, they are too cunning to profeſs that--What, ſays the friend of the ſociety, were the 30,000 men all cunning? Now, Mr. Fox obſerved, he fell in very much with this ſort of reaſoning, on behalf of the ſociety, becauſe he believed it was very difficult to collect together at any time, at any place, 30,000 men, all of them ſo cunning as to conceal their real object. A few individuals may be ſuppoſed capable of practiſing diſſimulation with ſucceſs, but to ſuppoſe thouſands capable of ſupporting the trick, was too much even for credulity itſelf. It had been ſaid, that the objection which he had ſtarted againſt one of the clauſes of the Bill, had procured an amendment. What was called an objection, was neither more nor leſs than a ſimple queſtion, and if the anſwer which they gave made them ſo ſenſible of the folly of the clauſe upon which it was grounded, as to produce an alteration, he neither gave them any credit for the amendment, nor took any to himſelf. It had been contended alſo that the ſenſe of the people of this country was not averſe to the paſſing of the Bills. If they had eyes and ears, he could not conceive how they could ever maintain ſuch a propoſition, which the experience of every day demonſtrated to be falſe. And if they had loſt the uſe of their ſenſes, it was not to be expected that he could make up the loſs by any arguments which he could adduce. Peace was ſaid to have been the charm which wrought upon the populace to make them

ſign Petitions againſt the Bills; but were not loyalty to the Sovereign, and the ſupport of the Conſtitution, as popular words as peace. nor were they leſs frequently or leſs artfully uſed to procure ſignatures to Petitions of a different nature. But if Gentlemen were willing to be deceived, in God's name let them be deceived. If they will ſhut their eyes, let them perſiſt in their error. The oppoſers of the Bills had alſo been accuſed of miſrepreſentation; but he would aſk on whom the ſuſpicion of miſrepreſentation was moſt likely to attach. The accuſers would not admit a day's delay, in order to rectify theſe miſrepreſentations; whereas the accuſed wiſhed for nothing ſo much as for a little delay, to compare their repreſentations with the fact. With regard to what had been ſaid upon the general opinion of the public upon this meaſure, he believed it to be, in the true ſenſe of the phraſe, as clearly againſt the general ſenſe of the people of this country, and as entirely unpopular, as any meaſure that ever was brought before Parliament. This, he was ſure, would be evident to every unprejudiced man in this kingdom. Upon looking at the Petitions which had been preſented, and ſtated to be in the nature of approbation of the Bills, ſcarcely one of thoſe Petitions directly approved of them, but prayed generally for ſuch meaſures as the wiſdom of Parliament might adopt, and were brought forward chiefly for an object, on which there could ſcarcely be two opinions in this country, namely, that of congratulating His Majeſty on his fortunate eſcape from the late daring outrage upon his perſon. With regard to the general topic that theſe are fit times for temporary reſtrictions upon popular rights, his opinion was directly the reverſe. He contended that this was not the period to abridge the liberty of Engliſhmen. The people of this country were now in a ſituation to be truſted with more liberty than any other nation on the face of the globe; and, from the degree of liberty which they have hitherto enjoyed, they were prepared for a greater ſhare of freedom than they have ever before poſſeſſed. He did not deny that there were men of miſchievous intentions in the country. And if it was aſked how he would reſiſt them? He would reply, by deſtroying the corruption of Government, by keeping their word to the nation, and aboliſhing the infernal Slave trade, by diſplaying the beauties of the Conſtitution, and by ſhewing the country that the Houſe of Commons were tenacious of their rights, and worthy of being intruſted with their beſt and deareſt privileges. For his own part, he had no great hope from reform, though he had always voted for it. He would enter into it, however, with zeal and candour, and with an inclination to grant, if not a radical, at leaſt a rational reform. In ſhort, he

would do every thing contrary to what had been done, and by ſuch a line of conduct, he was perſuaded, the diſcontented would either be entirely reconciled, or would be ſo much reduced in numbers as to be rendered completely contemptible. If the Bill paſſed, he could not prophecy what would be the event—he ſcarcely knew what was to be wiſhed. Liberty was deſirable, and peace was as deſirable, but if the Bill paſſed, and the law was executed, liberty and peace could not exiſt together. Perhaps Adminiſtration were convinced of the fact, but their pride would not allow them to retract the Bills, though they never meant to put their proviſions in execution. As for myſelf, ſaid Mr. Fox, let Gentlemen catechiſe me as much as they pleaſe, let them ſlander my character, and propagate their calumnies through the kingdom, I never will repent of one ſtep I have taken upon theſe Bills in any future period of my life. I am not vain enough to ſuppoſe, that any efforts of mine have contributed much to the ſpirit and the energy which has been manifeſted in this country; I ſhould be proud to think I had; I ſhould be glad to learn that any efforts of mine had contributed to awaken my countrymen to a ſenſe of the value of their own freedom. But I am convinced, that had it not been for the activity and zeal of oppoſition which has excited the ancient ſpirit of the country, the country could not now boaſt of that ſmall remnant of liberty which is ſtill left as a memorial of what we once enjoyed. A great orator, whoſe chief fault was vanity, ſaid at the concluſion of his Conſulſhip, "*Nobile jus jurandum juravi, ne quid omitterem ut reſpublica denique ſalva ſit.*" I cannot ſay this; but of one thing I am ſure, that if the people of England have ſtill any poor remains of their ancient liberty, it is owing to the ſpirited and ſteady reſiſtance which they have manifeſted on the preſent occaſion. For, if they had ſunk under the burden of taxes, and of accumulated diſaſters, which they are now doomed to bear, and tamely bowed to proud invaders of their liberty, without uttering a murmur or complaint, their condition would have been ſtill more deplorable than it even is at preſent. There is no part of my political life on which I cannot look back with pleaſure; but, amid reflections on the paſt, my conduct on the preſent occaſion will always be the ſubject of peculiar complacency; for I can honeſtly declare, I have diſcharged my duty to my conſcience, to my country, and to the Conſtitution.

MR. SECRETARY DUNDAS ſaid, that he ſhould not enter at large into the topics with which the Right Hon. Gentleman had commenced his ſpeech, for he ſpoke under a conſiderable irritation of mind; it was not to be expected that the Right Hon. Gentleman had fully conſidered all he ſaid. He had complained of being catechiſed

chised with respect to his views and principles, and had with great dexterity endeavoured to draw a line between his situation in that respect, and that of the Minister. Mr. Dundas said, it was true as far as it related to the affairs of State, and the conduct of public business, Ministers were responsible; but certainly, in their individual capacity, they were not more liable to what was called catechising than others. But if any Gentleman really was of opinion, that the Right Honourable Gentleman and his friends had been guilty of a breach of their duty in not attending on the Committee upon this Bill, it was certainly in order for him to accuse them for that neglect. For his own part he did not agree with those who regretted the absence of the Right Hon. Gentleman from the Committee, for as they had uniformly declared their aversion to the Bill, and their desire that it should go into the country in all its naked deformity, he was not hypocritical enough to say he lamented their absence; because he did not think they would have done any good if they had been present. There was another topic which had been introduced, which, he believed, contributed not a little to create that irritation which the Right Hon. Gentleman confessed himself to labour under—he meant that doctrine of resistance which had been advanced on a former night. Upon this point he certainly had no right to speak, not having been present in the House when the words were spoken by the Right Hon. Gentleman: he had, however, seen what he was informed was a very correct report of them, and if it was, it was not extraordinary that they excited the surprize and indignation of the House. He had observed, that the Gentlemen on the other side of the House constantly, upon this Bill, had introduced their doctrines of resistance; doctrines which, he was sure, they could not find laid down at the time of the Revolution. When the Revolution happened, the people were oppressed by the tyranny of the Executive Power; and there was no question of their right to resist, but it was the resistance of the people, with the legislative branch of the Constitution, contending against the Executive Power. And he would venture to assert, that among all that was said by our patriotic ancestors at the Revolution, nothing could be found which would, in any degree, justify the language which had been held upon this Bill. The Right Hon. Gentleman had put an extreme case, and had asked, whether if the King, Lords and Commons, were united for the purpose of depriving the people of their liberties, the people would not have a right to resist?—There could be no difficulty in answering that question in the affirmative; because, in that case, there would not, in fact, exist any Government at all. But he wished to put one plain question

tion to the good ſenſe of the Right Hon. Gentleman; which was, whether he really thought it conſiſtent with policy, or even with humanity, to hold ſuch language to the people? The expediency of reſiſtance was not a point of that ſort which the generality of mankind could ſafely conſider. The acute judgment of the Right Hon. Gentleman might have enabled him to arrange his ſyſtem of conduct, if ever ſuch a fatal event ſhould happen; but when he had ſhot his poiſoned arrows through the country; when he had inſtilled thoſe dangerous ſentiments, did he conſider what would be the conſequence? Every ignorant man would conceive he had a right to reſiſt every thing which did not accord with his opinions, and the reſult might be ſhocking to humanity. Such language would tend to bring all Government into diſgrace, or at leaſt, to render it precarious; he knew that the freedom of ſpeech in that Houſe gave every man a right of ſaying almoſt what he pleaſed, but every good and wiſe man would conſider the effect of his counſels, before he ſcattered them among the people. He would now come to conſider the ſubject more immediately before them.

He had liſtened to an Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) with the utmoſt curioſity, particularly to one part of his ſpeech, in which he ſpoke of the conduct of certain ſocieties. He heard him with the utmoſt ſatisfaction declare, that the views and object of theſe ſocieties were altered: he heard him admit that there had been certainly ſome very pernicious principles propagated by the ſocieties; and that they were much more inconſiderable in point of number now than heretofore. He wiſhed very much to hear the Hon. Gentleman give ſome ſtrong reaſons to the Houſe, in order to convince them of the converſion of theſe Gentlemen, without which he for one could not believe them. In the firſt place, he begged to call to the recollection of the Houſe, that in the year 1792, when Paine's book firſt made its appearance, it was adopted with the utmoſt warmth and avidity by the London Correſponding and Conſtitutional Societies, and circulated by every means in their power. He wiſhed now to aſk, what were the principles contained in that book? They were an attack upon the Monarchy, an attack upon the Legiſlature, and a libel upon the Revolution. Theſe were the leading features of a ſyſtem which they adopted, the principles of which they muſt have approved. Nothing would have given him more ſincere ſatisfaction than for the Hon. Gentleman to have come forward, and announced the converſion of thoſe people, which, if it exiſted, that Honourable Gentleman muſt be acquainted with, from his recent communication with them: but he (Mr. Sheridan) knew better than to pledge himſelf for their ſincerity, becauſe he knew

knew they were not ſincere; as a proof of which, he would refer the Houſe to a meeting on the 26th of October, three days before the meeting of Parliament, in which they expreſſed themſelves in the moſt inſolent and indecent manner, in an Addreſs to his Majeſty. In ſhort, from all their conduct and publications, there was no doubt of their deſign to ſubvert the Conſtitution, and he had not heard of any thing which led him to ſuppoſe they had altered their plan. He wiſhed the Houſe to look for a moment at the Addreſs voted at Copenhagen-Houſe, to which he had before alluded, and having examined its language, to ſee whether or no there was any connection between it and the atrocious attempt made immediately afterwards upon his Majeſty. But then great reliance was laid upon the Petition, which had been preſented to Parliament from theſe ſocieties. It was argued, that by petitioning, they acknowledge that Houſe, the authority of which they before denied: but he begged to aſk, when theſe Petitions had been ſent in?—Not till after the preſent Bills were propoſed. It now appeared that they could vote thanks to Dukes and Earls, and illuſtrious characters, whom they had hitherto treated with the groſſeſt abuſe. If, however, theſe ſocieties had really given up their deteſted ſyſtems, and would even join the Whig Club, the preſent acts would be waſte paper, they would never be carried into execution. Until, however, he had ſome ſtrong grounds for believing this ſudden change had taken place, he could not conſent to lay down his arms, more particularly at a moment when he had every reaſon to believe that they were ſparing no labour to make proſelytes to their cauſe. What he had hitherto ſaid related to the preamble of the Bill; he would now obſerve upon ſome attacks which had been made upon the Bill. It had been ſaid, that no Juſtice would act under this Bill, and that therefore Miniſters had purpoſely omitted the word "required," which is in the Riot Act; in anſwer to which he would only ſay, that in caſe of a riot, the Magiſtrate is called upon to act immediately, and from the preſſing nature of the danger; but under this act the immediate urgency was not ſo great, and therefore, the word "required," was not neceſſary. With reſpect to the argument upon the means of giving notice of a Meeting, he had to obſerve, that, from the number of Newſpapers, it was not likely that they ſhould not be able to get their Advertiſement inſerted; but even if they could not, they might go to the Clerk of the Peace, and it was not true that, if he did not deliver the notice to the Juſtices, the perſons calling it would not be anſwerable, becauſe they would have obeyed the law in giving the notice, and the meeting would certainly be legal. Upon the whole, then, it would appear, that not one of the eſtabliſhed

lished modes, in which the people used to meet for the purpose of petitioning, were interdicted by this Bill; and the whole question would resolve itself into the balance of two evils. As the law stood now, it was competent to any man to call a meeting, however numerous; and to hold almost what language he pleased: finding the mischief to which such a licence led, the question was, whether it would not be better to give up a part of that privilege, than to incur the dangerous consequences that might result from leaving its full exercise in the hands of bad men? With respect to the argument upon which Gentlemen relied so much, viz. that Magistrates might be guilty of great excesses under this Bill; he could only say, that if Magistrates acted wrong, they must be punished; they were allowed, in every act, a certain degree of discretion, which if they went beyond, they were liable to the rigour of the law; and he saw no reason why they should be allowed discretion in the Riot Act, and not in this. It had been imputed to him that he had said, that these Bills ought not to be passed except the general sense of the people was for them. He had never said that he would on all occasions yield to the majority of the people. What he had mentioned was that he was happy at the call of the House, because, through that medium, he would ascertain the sentiments of the people from their representatives. He certainly did think that the Bills ought not to pass unless the people were convinced of the propriety of a measure of the kind, though he wished to be understood to maintain, that cases might happen, in which it might be proper to pass laws, even against the sense of the people, for their own benefit and advantage, and of which the Legislature must judge. He was more the friend of the lower orders of the people, by retaining them in a sense of their duty, than those who attempted to lead them from the paths of industry and sobriety. Mr. Dundas then adverted to the Petitions before the House, and the arguments which had been made between persons of property, and those who had none; it depended, in his opinion, upon the nature of the subject: for instance, if all the societies were to petition against this measure, he certainly should not listen to them, because the object of the Bill was to restrain them; and he conceived there might be cases in which the Petitions of the common people ought not to be attended to, not because they were not deserving of the regard and affection of their governors, but because they were easily misled from the true consideration of their own interests. If they were to form a judgment of the sentiments entertained by the people by the voices of their representatives in Parliament, it would appear, that the Bill was acceptable to them. He condemned the odious distinction lately attempted

tempted to be introduced between the higher and lower orders, and expreſſed himſelf very friendly to the poor, who certainly deſerved every ſpecies of encouragement. As one proof, among many, that the mercantile part of the community were ſupporters of the Bill, he inſtanced the very reſpectable meeting at which Mr. Boſanquet was the Chairman, and beſtowed the higheſt encomiums on the gentlemen concerned, for their public ſpirit and patriotiſm.

Mr. Grey ſaid, that at ſo late an hour when he felt himſelf very much exhauſted, he ſuppoſed the Houſe might be little inclined to liſten, if he endeavoured to follow the Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt through the whole of his ſpeech, which indeed was in many points of it very difficult to underſtand. Some parts of it, however, he could not avoid anſwering. He thought that Mr. Dundas ought to have attended to the forcible and manly doctrines his Right Honourable Friend had laid down, rather than to the miſreprefentations that had been ſent abroad againſt him. He then ſtated what Mr. Fox had really ſaid on the ſubject of reſiſtance; which was, "that if any meaſure ſubverſive of the Conſtitution and the liberties of the people were attempted to be carried into effect, againſt the decided opinion of a great majority of the people, the doctrine of reſiſtance became neceſſary." Reproach was certainly as much due to Locke, Sydney, and even Judge Blackſtone, as to Mr. Fox on this head. He read a quotation from the ſpeech of Mr. Dolben on the trial of Dr. Sacheverel in elucidation of this; and ſaid that Mr. Dundas had drawn a line of diſtinction as to the reſiſtance of our anceſtors at the Revolution, becauſe in that caſe the Executive Power had made a direct attempt to deſtroy the liberties of the ſubject; but, ſaid he, if the two Houſes of Parliament ſhould combine with the Crown to this end, would it not be as good a reaſon for the reſiſtance of the people as againſt the Executive Power alone? The right of petitioning was one of the ſtrongeſt bulwarks of our liberties erected by the Revolution; he aſked if the people would not, therefore, be juſtified in reſiſtance to maintain it; and read a long extract from a ſpeech of Lord Chatham, in the caſe of Mr. Wilkes, which ſtrongly illuſtrated this poſition. Mr. Grey then came to notice what had fallen from Mr. Dundas, reſpecting the Petition of the Bankers, Merchants, &c. on which he laid ſuch very extraordinary ſtreſs; he gave a deſcription of the Meeting at Grocers' Hall, and the manœuvres practiſed to obtain a majority, and the tumultuous proceedings on the occaſion; from which he inferred, that the Petition, reſpectable as many names were that were attached to it, was not ſo pure and immaculate as to deſerve thoſe high-flown encomiums Mr. Dundas had beſtowed on it.

it. He ſaid that Hon. Gentleman had given more conſideration and weight to the ſocieties, by his proceedings againſt them, than they deſerved, or would otherwiſe have ever obtained.

The Lord Mayor ſaid, that at the Common Hall he thought the majority againſt the Bills at leaſt nine to one; and if at any time he found he could not conſcientiouſly vote according to the inſtructions of his Conſtituents, he ſhould aſk for the Chiltern Hundreds, and reſign his truſt: but ſince the meeting of the Bankers, &c. he was perfectly convinced there was a great majority of the Freemen of London in favour of the Bills, and therefore his mind was eaſy on that point.

Mr. Parker ſaid, he was preſent at the meeting at Grocers' Hall, and confirmed every thing his Hon. Friend (Mr. Grey) had ſtated in regard to that meeting.

Sir James Saunderson gave a detail of the origin and progreſs of the meeting at Grocers' Hall, from an accidental meeting at Mr. Harman's houſe, to another accidental meeting at the London Tavern, and denied that any unfair means were uſed to get poſſeſſion of the Hall by the party who poſſeſſed it.

Alderman Anderson ſaid a few words on the ſame ſubject.

Mr. Orde ſpoke in favour of the Bills, and taxed Mr. Fox with having varied to-night from the language he had uſed on a former occaſion.

Mr. Fox begged to be heard two words in anſwer to what the laſt ſpeaker had ſaid. He declared that he had not varied in the leaſt that night from what he had ſaid on a former occaſion, and appealed to the Houſe if he had; concluding with theſe words, that if the Honourable Gentleman perſiſted in ſaying ſo, there was no ſpecies of contempt ſo low to which he ſhould not think him entitled.

Mr. Orde, in explanation, aſſured Mr. Fox that he miſtook what he had ſaid, and that he did not mean to miſrepreſent or offend him.

The queſtion being called for, a diviſion took place—

Ayes (for the third reading)	266
Noes - - -	51
Majority	215

HOUSE of LORDS.

FRIDAY, DEC. 4.

The Duke of Ancaster preſented a Petition from the Corporation of Lincoln, and ſigned by the Sheriff only, in name of the

Cor-

Corporation and Inhabitants: it ſtated the inadequacy of the preſent laws, and prayed for ſome further proviſions for the Safety of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and againſt Seditious Meetings.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE objected to the Petition being received or laid upon the Table, becauſe it was contrary to the eſtabliſhed forms of the Houſe, to receive any Petition not ſigned by the perſons from whom it was ſtated to come.

LORD THURLOW coincided in this opinion, and the Petition was withdrawn, and tranſmitted back for ſignatures.

SEDITION BILL.

MR. PITT brought up the Bill againſt Seditious Meetings from the Commons, which was read a firſt time, and ordered to be read a ſecond time on Wedneſday the 9th, and to be printed.--Adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MR. BURDON begged leave to enquire whether it was conſiſtent with the Orders of the Houſe to preſent a Petition againſt a Bill after it had been read a third time and paſſed?

THE SPEAKER informed him that he knew of no Order to the contrary.

MR. BURDON then preſented a Petition from Sunderland, againſt the Convention Bills.

MR. DUNCOMBE preſented a Petition from the Freeholders of the County of York againſt the Bills, which had been put into his hands by a worthy Baronet (Sir William Milner). It was ordered to lie on the Table.

MR. WILBERFORCE ſaid, he roſe to preſent a Counter-Petition from Yorkſhire. He obſerved, that the mode in which the Petition, preſented by his Honourable Colleague, had been obtained, was very unfair. The Meeting was certainly regularly called, but the oppoſers of the Bills wiſhed not to let the ſupporters of them have regular notice.

Mr. Wilberforce ſtated, that he himſelf was in York when the Meeting for the Petition was called; and he expected, from the manner in which it was conducted, and the manner in which he found the friends of Oppoſition endeavoured to miſrepreſent the Bills, that he would be out-numbered. Thoſe who wanted a Petition againſt the Bills ſent for all their friends to the Weſt-Riding, and elſewhere; and took care not to make the buſineſs public where they expected oppoſition. The ſame ſort of miſrepreſentation was uſed as that which had been ſent to Newcaſtle, informing

forming perfons there that the Bankers and Merchants of the City of London, the People of Weftminfter, the Freeholders of Surrey, and Middlefex, unanimoufly oppofed the Bills. He faw that a paper, couched in the very fame words with that fent to Newcaftle, was tranfmitted to Yorkfhire. This paper grofsly mifreprefented, not only the fentiments of the people, but the Bills themfelves. He folemnly declared, that the public fenfe was decidedly in favour of the Bills in Yorkfhire. It was a refpectable county; and of this the Petition he was about to prefent was a proof, as it was figned by a very confiderable number of refpectable names. They reflected coolly on the Bills; and had prefented the Petition to that Honourable Houfe, in the affured idea that the Bills, if paffed into laws, were calculated to preferve to them the bleffings of the Conftitution.

Mr. Fox faid, he valued the county of York as much as any Gentleman, for men of worth and independence of character; he could not, however, but remark, how much the other fide of the Houfe feemed to exult on the circumftance of receiving a Petition in favour of their meafures from that county; they had not taken the fame notice of a Petition from the counties of Suffolk, of Surry, or of Middlefex, with which furely, if a criterion of the expreffion of public opinion was to be formed by Petition, no comparifon could hold; neither had the Petitions from different populous places in the fame county, as Halifax, Leeds, &c. been recollected, though the numbers who figned the latter Petitions amounted to near 20,000.

The Attorney General declared, that after what happened the preceding night on the paffing of the Bill, he could not avoid faying a few words, as he thought it pertinent to the prefent Petition. When he called to mind the tranfactions that formed the bafe of judicial proceedings in the laft State Trials at the Old Bailey, he could not avoid thinking on the then predicament of that great county. Societies here, acting conjointly with other focieties in Sheffield and Leeds, &c. addreffed the National Convention, and the Convention returned for anfwer, that they would affift them in maintaining what they called their Right. Thefe focieties were the caufe of the war; and their number was fo increafed, that upwards of 10,000 met at Hackney, openly avowing Jacobin principles, particularly one man, called *Breillet*. It was, at that Meeting, appointed to fend delegates to the Scotch Convention. When meetings were lefs frequent, in confequence of fome being profecuted and abfconding from juftice, many of them went down to Sheffield to abufe the right of Petition. There it

was

was publicly declared that they never would petition Parliament: for they maintained that the Legiſlature was not competent to redreſs their grievances; and declared they would tell the 558 Gentlemen who compoſed the Commons to go about their buſineſs. The alarming deſigns and dangerous practices of the ſocieties was proved by evidence on the Table of the Houſe. Thus the Conſtitution and Government were brought into peril by bad men, who ſet up the pretext of having grievances to complain of, as a plea for their aſſembling with far different views and intentions.

The Attorney General adverted to the hand-bill ſent down to Newcaſtle, miſrepreſenting the counties of Surry and Middleſex, the Cities of London and Weſtminſter. This paper, he repeated it, gave the moſt fallacious account of the Bills, omitting their beſt proviſions, and ſtating reſtrictions which they did not contain. The counties and places alluded to, from that miſrepreſentation, were ſo alarmed, as to petition againſt the Bills. Hence it was that the Sheriff of the County of Northumberland was called upon to ſign a requiſition for a meeting to vote a Petition againſt the Bills. He knew, from experience, that the inhabitants of that county were friends to the Conſtitution and Government; and he was certain that the Bills, when paſſed into laws, would attach them, if poſſible, ſtill more to the Conſtitution and Government.

Mr. Fox ſaid, that ſimilar proceedings with thoſe to which the Learned Gentleman alluded, had alſo taken place in Middleſex, in Weſtminſter, in Southwark, and in Surry. He mentioned that Petitions againſt the Bills had been received from nearly twenty thouſand perſons in the country, ſo that the Honourable Gentleman ought by no means to flatter himſelf with ſo deciſive a majority as he had repreſented.

The Petition was ordered to lie on the Table.

Mr. W. Smith reminded the Houſe that he had ſuggeſted an amendment to one of the Bills which the Learned Gentleman had adopted: it had been ſaid that miſrepreſentations of the Bills abroad, and not the Bills themſelves, had ſpread the alarm. Surely the Bills, as they at firſt ſtood, and the manner in which they had been announced to the Houſe by a Right Hon. Gentleman, contained ſeeds of alarm ſufficiently terrible to the country; beſide that, the very circumſtance of the amendments made in the Bills proved that the alarm had ariſen from the Bills themſelves, and not from miſrepreſentation.

Mr. Secretary Dundas brought up a Petition from the Traders, Manufacturers, &c. of the City of Glaſgow and its neighbourhood, in favour of the Bills.—Ordered to be laid on the Table.

Mr.

Mr. Sheridan presented a Petition from the Heritors of Strathaven, in the County of Lanark, againſt the Bills.—Ordered to be laid on the Table.

The Order of the Day being read for the Houſe to take into conſideration the Report of the Amendments made in the Committee on Lord Grenville's Bill, all the Gentlemen who had uniformly oppoſed it quitted the Houſe immediately. The Amendments were then gone through, and agreed to by the Houſe, after which the Bill, with the Amendments, was ordered to be engroſſed and read a third time on Thurſday next.——Adjourned at ten o'clock.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

SIR,

The obſervation of the worthy Alderman Anderſon, on the Advertiſe ment which appeared in your Paper of the 30th ultimo, in the Houſe of Com mons, calls on me, the Delegate, (as he is pleaſed to name me), from th Gentlemen who ſigned the Requiſition, to ſtate to you the circumſtance as i occurred, in order to rid myſelf from the imputation of folly, and that im propriety might attach itſelf to whom it belongs. From the four perſon who waited on him, the Alderman ſelected me, to whom, he ſaid, he ſhoulc ſend his anſwer the next day; in the morning I was ſent for by the Alder man, and deſired by him to communicate to the Gentlemen his refuſal tc call the Ward together, as the queſtion relative to the two Bills, now on the Table of the Houſe of Commons, had been ſufficiently diſcuſſed in the Court of Common Council, and in the Common Hall; he did not approve of partial Meetings; he deſired me ſubjoin this, "That he was extremely ſorry to differ with the Gentlemen who ſigned the Requiſition, but in this caſe he muſt uſe his own diſcretion." The buſineſs for which I waited on him was now at an end. A converſation took place, and not until then, beginning by an obſervation of the Alderman's, that there were no men of credit or reſpectability at the head of the Oppoſition to thoſe meaſures; to this I ſaid, that the Duke of Bedford, who had the largeſt fortune in this kingdom, would not oppoſe the preſent meaſures, if he thought they were neceſſary for the preſervation of that fortune. The Alderman then ſaid, that it was from pique that the Duke was ſo active, becauſe he had been diſappointed of the Lord Lieutenancy of the County of Middleſex; he next introduced the ſubject of Mr. Fox's India Bill, and afterwards ſaid, that all this ferment was only a ſtruggle for power. I then obſerved to the Alderman, that it appeared to me, that the people of this country were tired of the oppreſſive Adminiſtration of Mr. Pitt, and wanted to have a change of Meaſures and a change of Men.

Obſerving in the Debates in your Paper of the 28th ult. a ſtrange application of a part of this private converſation, I called on the Alderman the next morning with a Newſpaper, and read the ſentence to him from his ſpeech in the Houſe of Commons; which ſtates, that the perſons who waited on him ſaid, "That Mr. Pitt had been long enough in office, and they thought it

high

high time for Mr. Fox to fucceed him," to have fome explanation; he faid, he did not fee why I fhould trouble myfelf about it; by mentioning the word they, it did not apply to any one fingly; to the truth of this I will make my oath when required.

Little Britain, Dec. 4, 1795. ROBERT ALB. COX.

BRIDPORT, *Dec.* 1, 1795.

AT a refpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Borough, convened this day at the Town-Hall, by public notice given to the Bailiffs, in purfuance of a requifition for that purpofe to them directed, figned by feveral of the Inhabitants,

N. BOOLS, Efq. in the Chair,

The following Refolutions were feparately put and agreed to, the fenfe of the Meeting being taken by a fhew of hands, and one being held up againft the fixth Refolution only;—

Refolved, 1ft, That this Meeting declares its abhorrence of the late wicked attack on his Majefty's Perfon, and earneftly defires that the perpetrators of that atrocious outrage may be fpeedily difcovered and feverely punifhed.

2d, That lamenting the evils and calamities of the prefent difaftrous War, we confider the fpeedy reftoration of Peace as the fureft means of producing national plenty and profperity.

3d, That an Addrefs be prefented to his Majefty expreffive of thefe fentiments.

[Such an Addrefs having been then produced and read, an Amendment was propofed, and with the Addrefs agreed to, praying his Majefty to ufe his Conftitutional authority to prevent paffing into Laws two Bills, the one intitled, "An Act for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government againft Treafonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and the other, "An Act for the more effectually Preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies."]

4th, Confidering the numerous bleffings that have refulted from the excellent principles of the Britifh Conftitution, we feel alarm at the introduction of the faid Bills now pending in Parliament, which we conceive to be fubverfive of thefe principles, and a violation of the Bill of Rights.

5th, That it is a duty we owe to our Sovereign, our Country, and ourfelves, to petition the Honourable Houfe of Commons not to pafs thefe Bills into Laws.

[A Petition was then brought forward and approved, containing the fentiments recited in the two laft Refolutions, and declaring that the alterations adopted in the Houfe of Commons in the progrefs of the Bills, have not corrected their pernicious principle, nor rendered them lefs obnoxious to their numerous and refpectable oppofers.]

6th, That Charles Sturt and George Barclay, Efqrs. the Members for this Borough, be requefted to prefent the Addrefs and Petition.

7th, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Bedford and the other Peers, who oppofed the faid Bills.

8th, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, the two Reprefentatives of this Borough, and the other Members of the Houfe of Commons who oppofed the faid Bills.

9th, That the Addrefs and Petition be left at the Town-Hall, for fignatures.

10th, That thefe Refolutions be figned by the Chairman, and publifhed in the Morning Chronicle, the Courier, the Sun, and the Sherborn Papers.

11th, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Magiftrates for their readinefs in calling the Meeting.

(Signed) NICHOLAS BOOLS.

Refolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his impartial conduct in the Chair.

CAMBRIDGE, *Nov.* 25, 1795.

AT a Meeting of the County, convened this day by the High Sheriff, an Addrefs to his Majefty on the late atrocious infult given to him in his paffage to and from Parliament, was propofed, and the following Amendment was moved, and carried by a confiderable majority:

"While, with your Majefty's fubjects throughout the kingdom we thus unite in our congratulations, we cannot refrain from expreffing our alarm at the two Bills againft Treafon and Sedition, propofed by your Majefty's Minifters, under pretences that have never been fubftantiated by any regular and fatisfactory evidence. We humbly reprefent to your Majefty, that thefe Bills tend to deprive us of thofe inalienable privileges which were folemnly confirmed to us by the Bill of Rights at the glorious Revolution, and of which your Majefty is the fworn Defender.

"We therefore approach your Majefty with humble confidence, and earneftly petition that your Majefty would not liften to counfels, which, under the pretext of confulting your Majefty's fecurity, are only calculated to alienate from your Majefty the beft protection of your Majefty's Crown and Perfon, the affection of your People.

"Deploring the increafing calamities, arifing from the prefent unneceffary and difaftrous War, we intreat your Majefty to adopt the moft effectual means for procuring a fpeedy reftoration of Peace; being firmly convinced that the bleffings which attend it are abfolutely neceffary for the prefervation of our excellent Conftitution, the welfare of your Majefty, and the happinefs of all claffes of your Majefty's fubjects."

Several Gentlemen then gave notice to the Sheriff of their intention to bring forward a Petition to the Houfe of Commons, praying that the pending obnoxious Bills might not pafs into laws. But the Sheriff after fuch notice given, abruptly leaving the Meeting, an adjourned Meeting of the Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County was held at the Cap, and the faid Petition, with the following Refolutions, were propofed and agreed to unanimoufly:

Refolved, That the Right Hon. Charles James Fox be requefted to prefent the faid Petition to the Houfe of Commons.

Refolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and the other Lords who oppofed the faid Bills.

Refolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, and the other Members of the Houfe of Commons who oppofed the faid Bills.

Refolved, That the faid Refolutions be figned by the Chairman, and publifhed in the Newfpapers. (Signed) THOMAS BRAND.

Refolved,

Refolved, that the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his fpirited and impartial conduct.

YORK COUNTY MEETING.

AT a very numerous and refpectable Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of YORK, held at the Guildhall of the City of York, on Tuefday the 1ft day of December, 1795, in purfuance of the requifition of feveral Gentlemen, Freeholders of the faid County.

A difference with refpect to the choice of a Chairman having arifen, Sir Thomas Gafcoigne was propofed by the Gentlemen calling the Meeting and their friends, and Bacon Frank, Efq. was propofed by the Gentlemen in oppofition to them. On a divifion, Bacon Frank, Efq. was chofen Chairman by a very large majority, and admitted by both parties to take the Chair. And he having taken the Chair, it was then moved, that the Meeting fhould adjourn to the Caftle-yard, it having been ftated, that the Guildhall of the city was too fmall to contain the number of Freeholders affembled at York. The Gentlemen who had called the Meeting refifted any adjournment to the Caftle-yard, and expreffed their determination to continue in the Guildhall; adding, however, that they would not be bound by the fenfe of the majority of the Freeholders even then affembled in the Guildhall.

An adjournment of the Meeting to the Caftle-yard being moved and feconded, was carried, and the Meeting adjourned accordingly.

The Chairman having refumed the Chair in the Caftle-yard, Colonel Creyke moved an Addrefs, which being feconded by Mr. Stanhope, and fupported by Mr. Wilberforce, and the queftion being put whether the Addrefs propofed fhould pafs, it was carried, there being not more than ten diffentient voices. [See Appendix.]

Mr. Markham then moved, that the following Petitions to the Houfe of Lords and the Houfe of Commons fhould be adopted by the Meeting, which being feconded by Mr. Withers, was carried unanimoufly.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain in Parliament affembled.

The humble Petition of the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of York,

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners obferve by the votes of this Honourable Houfe, that meafures are now depending in Parliament for the better fecurity of his Majefty's Perfon, and for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Affemblies.

That your Petitioners are affected with the moft lively grief and abhorrence at the late atrocious attack on his Majefty's Perfon, when on the way to and from his Houfe of Parliament; and hope with confidence that the perpetrators of an outrage fo daring and treafonable, may be fpeedily brought to condign and exemplary punifhment.

That your Petitioners being convinced that the profperity and happinefs of the Nation are infeparably united with the fafety of his Majefty's Perfon, entreat that fuch Laws may be without delay enacted as the wifdom of your Honourable Houfe fhall deem proper, for the more ample fecurity of his Majefty.

That your Petitioners having witneffed the evil refulting to the State from divers evil difpofed perfons, convening large affemblies of the people, in

in which they disseminate licentious principles, destructive of the order and the happiness of society in general, and subversive of the principles of our glorious Constitution, think it necessary that a new Law should be framed to meet this new emergency, and look up to your constancy and wisdom, for the adoption of such measures as shall effectually prevent the further seditious practices and attempts of the ill-affected against his Majesty's Government.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, &c."

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Bacon Frank, Esq. for his able and upright conduct in the Chair.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Colonel Creyke, and Mr. Stanhope, for moving and seconding the Address to the King at this Meeting.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Wilberforce for his attendance at this Meeting, and for his steady and upright conduct in Parliament.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Markham for moving the Petitions.

BACON FRANK, Chairman.

AT a Meeting of the Freeholders of the County of York, held in pursuance of Advertisement, in the Guildhall of the City of York, on the 1st day of December, 1795,

Sir THOMAS GASCOIGNE, Bart. in the Chair,

Two Bills, the one entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government, against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and the other entitled, "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," were read to the Meeting; after which the Fifth Clause, and some other passages from the Bill of Rights, were also read:

Upon which the following Address and Petition to the Throne, and also the following Petition to the House of Commons, having been read to the Meeting,

A motion was made by the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, and seconded by William Wrightson, Esq. That the said Address and Petition to the Throne do pass as the Act of this Assembly, which motion being put by Sir Thomas Gascoigne, was carried unanimously in the affirmative.

After which a motion was made by the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, and seconded by William Wrightson, Esq. That the said Petition to the House of Commons do pass as the Act of this Assembly, which motion being put by Sir Thomas Gascoigne, was carried unanimously in the affirmative.

It was then moved, seconded, and carried unanimously, That the Address and Petition to the Throne, and the Petition to the House of Commons be presented by Henry Duncombe, Esq. and Sir William Milner.

It was then moved, seconded, and carried unanimously, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Sir Thomas Gascoigne, and the other worthy Subscribers to this Requisition, at whose instance this Meeting was convened.

THOMAS GASCOIGNE, Chairman.

TO

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The Addreſs and humble Petition of the underſigned Freeholders of the County of York.

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

We the underſigned Freeholders of the county of York, beg leave to approach the Throne, with our moſt cordial congratulations on your Majeſty's deliverance from the late atrocious attacks on your Royal perſon, in your paſſage to and from Parliament: we cannot expreſs, in terms ſufficiently ſtrong, our deteſtation and abhorrence of thoſe baſe and unmanly outrages; and we moſt earneſtly wiſh and hope, that the perpetrators of thoſe enormous crimes, on due conviction of their guilt, may ſpeedily be brought to condign puniſhment; and we truſt that the juſt ſeverity of that puniſhment will effectually prevent the repetition of ſuch abominable outrage.

We are eager, Sire, on this occaſion, to join the great body of our fellow-ſubjects, in expreſſing to your Majeſty the ſentiments of loyal and dutiful hearts: We reflect with pleaſure on the mildneſs and benignity of your Majeſty's perſonal character; we recollect with ſatisfaction your voluntary propoſition, at an early period of your reign, for ſecuring the independence of the Judges, and divers inſtances, at ſubſequent periods, of your gracious diſpoſition to liſten to the complaints of your People, and we acknowledge with gratitude the many bleſſings we have enjoyed in the general courſe of your Majeſty's Government: We do therefore declare, that we are warmly attached to your Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and firmly reſolved, with our beſt faculties, and to the utmoſt extent of our power, to ſupport the Conſtitution, on its genuine principles, and in all its branches.

Having made this moſt ſincere and ſolemn declaration, we feel it to be our duty in the preſent perilous conjuncture, not to retire from the Throne, without having firſt laid at the foot of it, with all poſſible deference and duty, the declaration of our moſt humble opinion, that the war in which we have been ſome years unfortunately engaged, has been a moſt expenſive, bloody, and diſaſtrous war; that the calamities and accumulated burthens which have been the conſequence of this war, have alſo been the cauſe of a great part of thoſe diſcontents which now diſtract this country, and that the continuance of the war, inſtead of leſſening thoſe evils, too plainly tend to increaſe and inflame them, more eſpecially when there is reaſon to fear that the ſcourge of ſcarcity may be ſoon added to that of war: Conſidering the diſtreſſed and dangerous ſituation of the country at preſent, and the much greater calamities to which a protraction of the war may expoſe your Majeſty and the nation, we deem it our duty, with great humility, but with equal earneſtneſs, to entreat your Majeſty to endeavour, by engaging in a negociation with the exiſting Governments of France and Holland, ſpeedily to reſtore to your faithful people the bleſſings of peace. And ſhould thoſe Governments unexpectedly refuſe to conclude a peace on equitable terms, your Petitioners will courageouſly bear the evils of a continued war, then unavoidable, and ſupport your Majeſty in the proſecution of it with their moſt vigorous exertions, until reaſonable terms of peace can be obtained.

To the Honourable the COMMONS of Great Britain in Parliament aſſembled,

The Petition of the underſigned Freeholders of Yorkſhire,

SHEWETH,

That, by the fifth Article of the Bill of Rights, the people of this land are entitled to the privileges of free diſcuſſion, and free petition to the Legiſla-

ture. These rights, like every other political right, are liable to be abused; but if they have been abused by any rash and misguided individuals, we do conceive, that for the fault of a few desperate persons, the whole people of England ought not, and justly cannot forfeit these invaluable privileges; and such forfeiture would be more especially grievous, when their general loyalty, their love of order and tranquillity, and their attachment to the Constitution, are certain and unquestionable. We have seen, therefore, with grief and astonishment, that two Bills, one of which is entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" the other of which is entitled, "A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," have been offered to Parliament by his Majesty's Ministers in the present Session, by which we humbly conceive such restraints are proposed to be laid on the exercise of our Rights of Free Discussion and Free Petition to the Legislature, as would amount, if passed into laws, to a direct and fatal violation of the Bill of Rights. In the language of that memorable statute, our ancestors, at the æra of the Revolution, did claim, demand, and insist on each of the enumerated articles as their ancient indubitable Right; and as such they were offered by the two Houses of Parliament to the acceptance of his Majesty, King William, and by him they were accepted, as the conditions on which the Royal State and Dignity were transferred to him.

On the same implied conditions we have ever understood the Royal State and Dignity to have been subsequently settled on his present Majesty's illustrious Family; and as the Rights confirmed in this Statute have been justly deemed the most sacred Rights of the Nation, and have hitherto suffered under the authority of Parliament no violation, however small in its degree, however short in its duration; we trust the first example of any legislative infringement of these our ancient and indubitable Rights will not occur during the reign of our present Gracious Sovereign.

We therefore do most humbly petition this Honourable House, that the fundamental Laws of the Land may remain unchanged; and particularly we do most earnestly request, that the two Bills in question may not pass this Honourable House, and your Petitioners will ever pray, &c.

At the commencement of the above Meeting, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Bart. was called to the Chair. A cry was then raised for Bacon Frank, Esq. to take the Chair, which, after much noise and tumult, he did: but, instead of immediately proceeding upon the business for which the Meeting was convened, a motion was made for an adjournment to the Castle Yard. This motion was resisted by most of the Gentlemen who had signed the Requisition to the High Sheriff and their friends, inasmuch as the use of the Castle Yard had been before refused them by the Under Sheriff: whereupon, after much altercation, the Chairman declared the Meeting adjourned. Then he and his friends accordingly withdrew to the Castle, leaving those who had promoted the Meeting and their supporters in possession of the Hall. Sir Thomas Gascoigne being then called to the Chair, the above Address and Petition were unanimously agreed to, and the Freeholders present subscribed their names to both, with the places of their several Freeholds annexed; and the same were forwarded that evening to London.

STOWMARKET (SUFFOLK) *Nov.* 30, 1795.

AT a numerous and respectable Meeting of Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Suffolk, held here this day, convened by public advertisement,

JOSHUA GRIGBY, Esq. being called to the Chair,

Two Bills now pending in Parliament, the one entituled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and the other, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," being read, Mr. Lofft moved several Resolutions, expressive of the dangerous tendency of both, which being unanimously agreed to, the following Petition was adopted:—

To the Honourable the COMMONS of GREAT BRITAIN, in Parliament assembled.

The Humble PETITION of the undersigned Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Suffolk, sheweth,

That your Petitioners approach this Honourable House with sentiments of unfeigned Attachment to the Principles of the Constitution, established by the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

That your Petitioners have seen with indignation the principles of that Constitution violated by the atrocious insult lately offered to the Person of his Majesty.

But that your Petitioners view, with the most serious alarm, the introduction of two Bills into Parliament, the one entituled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" the other, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies;" the obvious tendency of which is to invest the Magistrates with new and arbitrary powers, to introduce new penal laws and constructive treasons, and to build on the ruins of our dearest rights a system incompatible with any free Constitution whatever.

That your Petitioners consider the said Bills as unnecessary, impolitic and unconstitutional, Unnecessary, because the existing laws are adequate, as well to the detection as to the punishment of offenders. Impolitic, because they will lessen that confidence which should subsist between the people and their Representatives, and that respect which is due to the Magistrates and the Laws. And Unconstitutional, because they tend to frustrate the provisions of the Bill of Rights; to deprive the people of the privileges of Petition and Remonstrance; to prevent this Honourable House from being informed of the wishes of its Constituents; to extend the influence of the Executive Power, and by restraining the constitutional exercise of political discussion, to surrender into its hands the bulwarks of popular liberty.

Therefore your Petitioners most humbly intreat this Honourable House not to permit the said Bills to become the laws of the Realm.

That your Petitioners, convinced that the present apprehensions of public danger arise more from the continuance of a disastrous War than from any other cause, are of opinion, that the Restoration of Peace, by lessening the public burdens, will better tend to allay popular discontent than the most coercive regulations; they therefore humbly hope that this Honourable House will use its best exertions to obtain a termination of hostilities, as the most certain means of preserving internal tranquillity.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray, &c.

Resolved,

Resolved,

That the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. and James Martin, Esq. be requested to present the said Petition.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to those Members of the two Houses of Parliament who have steadily opposed the two Bills against which this Meeting have now petitioned.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Mr. Lofft.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to those Gentlemen who by their names annexed to the advertisement for that purpose, have been the cause of calling this Meeting.

That the Thanks of this Meeting be given the Chairman for his conduct in the Chair. JOSHUA GRIGBY, Chairman.

PAUL's HEAD TAVERN, *Dec.* 3, 1795.

A MEETING of the Committee (not that announced to the public by a Paper called, The TIMES) for conducting a Petition to the Honourable the House of Commons against two certain Bills now pending there, and which was unanimously agreed to by a Meeting fairly called by public advertisement; and also for conducting a Petition to the King, praying for an immediate Peace and the Removal of his Evil Advisers, and which was also agreed to at a Meeting (publicly advertised for six days, and from which no Inhabitant of the City was excluded) of upwards of 800 Gentlemen, with only 25 dissentient voices, being this day held to take into consideration a certain Advertisement, dated "London Tavern, 27th Nov." signed, among others, by 16 Bank Directors, 7 Members of Parliament who have already voted in favour of the two Bills, 7 Contractors, &c. &c. (to say nothing of National Loans!) and to consider also of the flagrantly partial proceedings and invidious Declaration of the Meeting at Grocers'-Hall on the 2d inst.

It was Resolved, as the opinion of this Committee, That such transaction was founded on the mean and desperate resort of a wretched and corrupt Administration, disgraceful, and unworthy of men who deem themselves the Heads of a Great and Commercial City; and that a further cognizance of it would be derogatory to our own dignity and to that of the City of London.

Resolved also, That the alarming intervention of such a Body of Bank Directors, in the present distressed state of Trade and Commerce, is highly dishonourable to them, and a mortal stab to the Independence, the Interests, and the Liberties of the Inhabitants of the Metropolis of the World.

Signed by desire of the Committee,

SAMUEL FERRAND WADDINGTON.

AT a Meeting of the Inhabitants of BRIDGE-WARD, held on Tuesday the 1st of December, 1795, at the Parish Church of St. Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge,

Sir JAMES SANDERSON, Bart. in the Chair,

Resolved unanimously, That we reflect with the greatest concern and indignation upon the late atrocious attack on the sacred Person of his Majesty, and sincerely hope that the daring offenders will be speedily brought to justice.

Resolved,

Resolved by a majority of eight (there being 56 for the affirmative, and 48 for the negative,) that it appears to this Meeting, that the two Bills, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," and "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," are measures not calculated to preserve the peace and order of Society, but to excite just and serious apprehensions in the minds of his Majesty's loyal subjects for the loss of their indispensible and reasonable liberties, as established at the Glorious Revolution in 1688, and, by depriving the people of their ancient and acknowledged rights, have a tendency to produce those discontents and that anarchy, the prevention of which is the professed object of the Bill in question.

Resolved unanimously, That Thanks be given to Sir James Sanderson, for his readiness in convening this Meeting, and for his candour and ability in conducting it.

Resolved, That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman and inserted in the public Papers. JAMES SANDERSON.

BRIDGE WARD, *Dec.* 2, 1795.

WE, the undersigned, Inhabitants of the Ward of Bridge, do hereby publicly declare our dissent from the Resolution which was carried by a majority of eight, at the Meeting held at the parish church of St. Magnus, on Tuesday the 1st instant, relative to the two Bills now pending in Parliament, for the better Security of his Majesty's Person, and for the Suppression of Tumultuous and Seditious Assemblies. Signed by 93 names.

AT a Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City of EDINBURGH, and of the neighbourhood, held at Sommer's Tavern, upon Saturday the 28th of November, 1795,

JAMES MANSFIELD, of Midmar, Esq. Banker, in Edinburgh, was called to the Chair,

The following Resolutions were moved by the Hon. Henry Erskine, of Newhall, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, and seconded by William Ferguson, of Raith, Esq. and unanimously agreed to.

Resolved, That while we view with abhorrence the atrocious attack on his Majesty, upon the first day of this Session of Parliament, it is with the greatest surprise and concern, that we see that attack made the pretence of introducing Bills into Parliament, which strike at the very existence of the British Constitution.

Resolved, That a Petition be presented to the House of Commons, praying that these Bills may not pass into law.

Resolved, That in case the Bill for "the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," shall pass the House of Commons, a Petition be presented to the House of Lords, praying that it may not pass into a law.

Resolved, As in our opinion nothing can tend so much to quiet the minds of the people, and to secure the Constitution from the attacks with which it is threatened, as the restoration of peace, and therewith the blessings of that plenty which we formerly enjoyed, and of which a long, ruinous, and destructive war has chiefly tended to deprive us.

Therefore that a Petition be presented to his Majesty, praying that he will be graciously pleased to take the most speedy and effectual measures for restoring to his distressed subjects the blessings of peace. And draughts of these

these Petitions having been laid before the Meeting, were unanimously approved of.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk, his Grace the Duke of Bedford, his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, the Right Hon. the Earl of Lauderdale, the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, the Hon. Thomas Erskine, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Esq. Charles Grey, Esq. Charles Sturt, Esq. and to the other Members of both Houses of Parliament, who, by their manly exertions in opposition to these Bills, have added new lustre to their names.

Resolved, That the Earl of Lauderdale be requested to present the Petition to the House of Lords.

Resolved, That the Hon. Thomas Erskine be requested to present the Petition to the House of Commons.

Resolved, That the Earl of Lauderdale, and the Hon. Thomas Erskine be requested to present the Petition to his Majesty.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to carry these Resolutions into execution, and that the Committee do consist of the following gentlemen:—Mr. Mansfield, the Chairman; Wm. Fergusson, of Raith, Esq. Gilbert Meason, of Mordun, Esq. Merchant in Edinburgh; John Lamont, of Lamont, Esq. James Gibson, Esq. Writer to the Signet; Mr. William Maclean, Merchant in Edinburgh; Mr. James Burn, Merchant, in Edinburgh; the Hon. Henry Erskine; Lieutenant-Colonel M'Lean, of Coll; James Grant, of Corriemonie, Esq. Advocate; Thomas Adair, of Genoch, Esq. W. S. Charles Hay, of Faichfield, Esq. Advocate; Mr. A. Leslie, Merchant, in Edinburgh; and that these Resolutions be printed in all the Edinburgh Newspapers, and in such of the London Newspapers the Committee shall direct.

JAMES MANSFIELD, Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair, and the Hon. Henry Erskine being called to it, the Thanks of the Meeting were unanimously voted to James Mansfield, Esq. for his independent and impartial conduct as Chairman of this Meeting.

HENRY ERSKINE.

EDINBURGH, *Nov.* 30, 1795.

THE Committee for conducting a Petition to his Majesty for Peace, and the Petition against the "Bill for more effectually securing his Majesty's Person and Government," and the "Bill for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies," are sorry that the public have not received the early intimation of the proceedings of the Meeting on Saturday last, owing to what appears to them to be a most daring violation of law. The person employed to stick up the Copies of the Resolutions (who proceeded to do so as early on Saturday evening as they could be printed) having been seized, confined in the City Guard, and deprived of the Copies intrusted to his charge.

The Committee, on receiving notice of this occurrence, thought it their duty to themselves and their Constituents, to write the following Letter to the Lord Provost:—

My Lord, *Edinburgh, Nov.* 29.

As Members of a Committee of Inhabitants of Edinburgh, who met yesterday to exercise their Constitutional Right of Petitioning his Majesty, and both Houses of Parliament, we make the present respectful application

to your Lordſhip, deſiring to be informed, whether your Lordſhip, or the Magiſtrates and Town Council of Edinburgh, gave any authority for ſeizing the perſon employed by us, to paſte up in the different parts of the City printed Copies of the incloſed Reſolutions of the Meeting above mentioned, and for impriſoning in the City Guard the perſon ſo employed by us.

We expect an immediate anſwer from your Lordſhip, addreſſed to our Chairman. And We have the honour to be, &c.

To which Letter the following Anſwer was returned to the Chairman of the Committee:—

Sir, *Edinburgh, 29th Nov. 1795.*

On going to the Council Chamber this morning, I was informed, that one of the ordinary watchmen of the City, obſerving a perſon at a late and unuſual hour laſt night, paſting up hand-bills in different parts of the City, had apprehended and carried him to the guard, from which he was liberated by order of one of the Magiſtrates, as ſoon as the report was made to him, the Magiſtrate having been applied to in the night for that purpoſe.

The whole was done in the ordinary courſe of the Police, without any previous order, and would equally have happened to any perſon paſting up any other hand-bill, at ſo untimely an hour.

I have the honour to be, &c.

JAMES STERLING, Provoſt.

DUNDEE, *Nov.* 28, 1795.

AT a numerous Meeting of the Inhabitants held here this day, a Petition to the Honourable HOUSE of COMMONS was agreed upon (with one diſſenting voice) againſt the two alarming Bills now pending; the Meeting afterwards unanimouſly adopted the following Reſolutions, and ordered them to be inſerted in the Newſpapers:—

Reſolved,

I. That we have ſeen, with decided diſapprobation and deep regret, the late outrage upon the Perſon of his Majeſty in his paſſage to Parliament.

II. That, while in common with all Loyal Subjects, we lament this daring attack, it is with the utmoſt concern we have obſerved it made the pretext for the introduction of two Bills into Parliament, which, in our apprehenſion, if enacted into Laws, will completely ſubvert the Britiſh Conſtitution, as eſtabliſhed at the Revolution, 1688—directly violate the Bill of Rights—prove deſtructive to the Liberty of the Preſs, and the Freedom of Public Diſcuſſion—and by alienating the Affections of the People, may tend to render his Majeſty's Perſon and Government leſs ſecure.

III. That theſe Bills, by infringing the juſt Rights of the People, particularly that of Petitioning the ſeveral Branches of the Legiſlature, deprive us of the only means we poſſeſs of expreſſing our opinion upon Public Matters, having no voice in the choice of our Repreſentative in Parliament, nor even in that of our Magiſtrates, who have the abſurd privilege of electing both him and themſelves.

IV. That, conceiving the exiſting Laws againſt Treaſon and Sedition to be fully competent to the puniſhment of theſe Offences, we cannot, without alarm and diſmay, view the extenſion of them, in a manner which deprives

prives a whole Nation of their acknowledged and unalienable Rights and Privileges.

V. That the Thanks of this Meeting be preſented to his Grace the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Lauderdale, the Right Honourable Charles James Fox, Meſſrs. Grey, Erſkine, Sheridan, Lambton, and the other diſtinguiſhed Patriots who have ſtood forward upon this momentous occaſion.

By Order of the Meeting,

DAVID JOBSON, Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair, the Thanks of the Meeting were unanimouſly voted him for his very proper and impartial conduct in the Chair. DAVID DAVIDSON.

FRIENDS OF THE PEOPLE.

Freemaſon's Tavern, Dec. 5, 1795.

AT a General Meeting of the Society of the Friends of the People, aſſociated for the purpoſe of obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, held this day,

NICOLLS RAYNSFORD, Eſq. in the Chair,

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the following Addreſs from this Society to the People be printed and publiſhed.

We are ſolicitous once more to addreſs our Fellow-Countrymen, while we can deliberate exempt from the inſolent controul of a Magiſtrate, and, in the diſcuſſion of our common intereſts, are yet permitted to hold up the Bill of Rights as our buckler and defence.

We aſſociated to propoſe to Parliament, and to the Nation, a Reform in the conſtruction of the Houſe of Commons: in purſuit of this object we have ſhewn that eighty-four individuals, by their own immediate authority, ſend one hundred and fifty-ſeven Members to Parliament!—that ſeventy more powerful individuals, by their influence, return one hundred and fifty other Members! making together a majority of the Houſe!—that a large portion of theſe Members are nominated by Peers, in direct violation of the acknowledged Conſtitution of our Country! an evil continually increaſing with every new creation: in ſhort, that a large majority of the Houſe of Commons are returned by Electors ſo few in number, that the great body of the People, of every rank and deſcription, are excluded from the ſemblance of a choice; and even where Elections appear to be popular, the mode of conducting them, and the complex nature of the Rights of Election, have rendered the expence of a conteſt ſo ruinous, as to transfer to the overgrown wealth of a few the whole rights of the Britiſh Nation. Theſe facts, and theſe conſequences, we have detailed in our Petition to the Houſe of Commons, and offered to eſtabliſh by evidence at their Bar. The Houſe of Commons have admitted our Petition on their Journals, declined the proof, and thereby confeſſed that our allegations are true.

We are anſwered, that the practical effect of this dominion of the few is really beneficial to the People! This we deny. We appeal to the frequent wars by which the People are exhauſted, undertaken by the caprice of Miniſters, whoſe dictates are implicitly obeyed. We appeal more particularly to the waſteful profuſion of the preſent odious war, in which the demands of Miniſters are made without feeling, and granted without inveſtigation or delay. We appeal to the growing eſtabliſhments, both in peace and war! to the enormous debt of three hundred millions, already accumulated! to twenty-

twenty-one millions of pounds ſterling annually exacted from leſs than ten millions of People! to burthens progreſſively increaſing beyond the example of any former age or country, which have already placed the comforts and many of the neceſſaries of life beyond the reach of a large portion of the community. To arreſt the progreſs of theſe evils we ſee no rational means, but by reſtoring to the People an effective Repreſentation in Parliament; by eſtabliſhing a common intereſt between thoſe who hold the public purſe and the great body of the nation; by creating a Repreſentative Aſſembly, who will calmly examine the complaints and redreſs the grievances of the People; who poſſeſſing their confidence, may give order and œconomy to the Government, and ſtability to the laws.

We feel extreme alarm in beholding an oppoſite ſyſtem of conſtraint adopted; new treaſons created, vague and undefined; a meaſure ever regarded as the harbinger of civil contention; the mild ſpirit of our laws ſubverted, and the puniſhment of felony inflicted on miſdemeanors: above all, that moſt important right of public diſcuſſion, eſtabliſhed by the Bill of Rights, that principal diſtinction of freemen, that ſource of the open, liberal and manly character, which diſtinguiſhes the Britiſh nation, completely, as we think, deſtroyed by proviſions which make the free exerciſe of it altogether impoſſible.

Theſe meaſures lead evidently to deſpotiſm, perhaps to anarchy. Poſſibly the Britiſh nation may experience the horrors of both conditions before the People can recover their rights. The preſent meaſures ſufficiently develope the ſyſtem of our Rulers: an immenſe military force is eſtabliſhed; and the ſoldiers are collected into barracks that they may not imbibe the ſentiments of the People; while our Miniſters profeſs themſelves prepared to act even beyond the law. But what can avail even the ſtricteſt adherence to the letter of the law, while the few poſſeſs the whole power of Legiſlation? The Trial by Jury may indeed ſubſiſt; but Juries, by their oaths, muſt conform to the laws preſcribed, and under the form of freedom the nation may be ſlaves.

The time is now arrived when the Britiſh nation muſt make their election, either patiently to ſubmit to this ſyſtem of conſtraint, which, from its irritating nature, will ever furniſh pretexts for making new advances, or they muſt, in a temperate but determined tone, demand the reſtoration of their rights, as eſtabliſhed at the Revolution, claim an effective voice in the choice of Repreſentatives, and by their orderly, dignified, and united Petitions induce their Governors to return into the paths of peace.

Reſolved, That a General Meeting of this Society be held here on Saturday next the 12th inſtant, to conſider what ſteps may be neceſſary to regulate the future meetings and proceedings of this Society, under the unprecedented reſtrictions of the two Bills now depending in Parliament, if unfortunately for the liberties of the country they ſhould be paſſed into laws.

In name and by order of the Society,

(Signed) N. RAYNSFORD, Chairman.

To the Members of the Faculty of Advocates not reſident in EDINBURGH.

GENTLEMEN, *Prince's-ſtreet, Dec. 2, 1795.*

THE diſtance of your reſidence, and my ignorance of the proper Addreſs to many of you, obliges me to take this method of communication.

I yeſterday received a Letter from the following Gentlemen, Members of the Faculty:

JOHN PRINGLE, Eſq. JAMES OSWALD, Eſq.
ALLEN MACONOCHIE, Eſq. DAVID HUME, Eſq.
NEIL FERGUSSON, Eſq. AND
ROBERT CRAIGIE, Eſq. D. BOYLE, Eſq. Advocates.
CHARLES HOPE, Eſq.

Of which Letter the following is a Copy:

Sir,

It gives us very great pain to find ourſelves called upon, by the ſentiments we entertain of what becomes us as good ſubjects, to tranſmit to our brethren a letter, of which a copy is incloſed. But we ſhould feel ſtill more unpleaſantly, if we were not perſuaded that you have too much candour not to aſcribe this meaſure to its true cauſe, and believe that, in point of perſonal regard, we remain your friends and well wiſhers. We have the honour to be

Your moſt obedient humble Servants, &c.

The following is a Circular Letter referred to in the above.

Sir, Edinburgh, Dec. 1, 1795.

WE take the freedom of addreſſing you as a Member of the Faculty of Advocates, upon a matter which appears to us very nearly to concern the reputation of that Learned and Honourable body; we mean the election of the perſon who ſhall preſide over them as Dean for the enſuing year.

It will, Sir, be obvious to you, that the ſentiments, and principles of the members of the Faculty, relative to theſe great national and conſtitutional intereſts, which unhappily have, for ſome years, been ſo much the ſubjects of anxiety to all loyal citizens, muſt in a great meaſure be judged of from the conduct of the perſon, who by their annual and voluntary choice, is raiſed to the high ſtation of the head of the Bar, and of their Society.

In this view, with which we are ſtrongly impreſſed, we beg leave to preſs it on your ſerious attention, whether the late political conduct and public appearances of the preſent Dean of Faculty, on occaſion of the Bills now depending in Parliament, for the better preventing of Seditious Aſſemblies, have been ſuch as merit their approbation, or render him the moſt proper perſon that can be found in the Faculty, to repreſent them to the world, and to ſuſtain their character of attachment to the laws and Conſtitution of their country.

The Lord Advocate has been propoſed, by a great number, as a perſon, who in this, and in all other reſpects, is fit to be confided in, and worthy of the honour; and hoping that, along with us, you may view him as a proper ſucceſſor, we requeſt your preſence on the day of election, which is the 12th day of January next. We are, Sir,

Your moſt obedient humble Servants,

JOHN PRINGLE, DAVID HUME,
A. MACONOCHIE, CHA. HOPE,
NEIL FERGUSSON, JAMES OSWALD,
RO. CRAIGIE, DAVID BOYLE.

And the following is my Anſwer to the above recited Letters:

Gentlemen, Edinburgh, Dec. 1, 1795.

I have this moment received your letter. Whatever ſentiments I may entertain of the political motives it avows, I am bound to acknowledge the perſonal kindneſs it expreſſes towards myſelf. The propriety of making the communication,

communication, after having canvaſſed many of the Faculty, (a fact to which I am no ſtranger) I leave to your own feelings.

I had the honour, and I reckoned it the higheſt honour of my life, to be elected Dean of the Faculty of Advocates at a time when, along with thoſe who now compoſe his Majeſty's Cabinet, I oppoſed the Adminiſtration of Mr. Pitt, on principles from which it is my greateſt pride to reflect, that no view of perſonal intereſt, no fear of perſonal conſequences, have ever induced me for a moment to ſwerve. The utmoſt intereſt of Government was exerted to defeat my election: but the Faculty were free and independent. Their ſpirit reſiſted undue influence, and I was placed at your head by a decided majority.

It would be preſumption in me to ſay that my conduct, ever ſince, has deſerved your approbation: but to what elſe can I impute your having ten ſucceſſive years re-elected me unanimouſly to the ſame honourable ſituation?

I am bound to give you credit for the motives which you ſay induced you to take a ſtep ſo unprecedented in the annals of the Faculty. I was originally elected, in conſequence of perſonal ſolicitation. It would have been arrogance in me to have expected to attract your choice, without my expreſſing the honourable ambition I felt to preſide amongſt you. I ſhall not now deſcend to ſolicitation. To the Faculty my character, my conduct as a Gentleman, as a brother, are known. If a majority of your number, departing from the uniform ſentiments of our body, to exclude political diſcuſſions and conſiderations from amongſt us, ſhall withdraw from me their ſuffrages at the enſuing election, I may regret it; but I am proud to ſay, the cauſe of their doing ſo I ſhall ever reckon my higheſt honour.

Deſcended from anceſtors, whoſe exertions contributed to bring about that glorious Revolution, which ſecured the liberties of my country, which placed the preſent illuſtrious Family on the Throne, and the principles of which, I truſt, ſhall preſerve it there to the lateſt poſterity, it is my pride and glory to have come forward at this alarming period, to preſerve thoſe liberties from invaſion;—to have done ſo, along with many of the moſt noble and illuſtrious characters in the kingdom, along with the united voice of all the public bodies, and the great maſs of the Inhabitants of the metropolis of the nation, and of the great majority of its counties and cities; but above all, along with the unbiaſſed, the uncorrupted dictates of my own conſcience.

If ſuch a conduct, reſulting from ſuch motives, unfits me, in your opinion, any longer to fill the Chair of the Faculty, you will act as you ſee fit. If ſuch ſhall be the opinion of the majority of my brethren; if they are determined that there ſhall be no longer amongſt us freedom of political opinion; if party prejudice and violence are to uſurp the place of moderation, of perſonal reſpect, and of private friendſhip; I can only ſay, that ſuch was not the Faculty of Advocates when I was firſt honoured with the ſituation which I now enjoy. To have received it was a high honour, I ſhall conſider it as a ſtill higher honour to lay it down. For, in my opinion, the higheſt honour that can be enjoyed by a virtuous mind, is the reflection of having allowed no perſonal conſideration to ſtand between it and the firm, manly, and independent performance of public duty. I am Gentlemen,

Your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

HENRY ERSKINE.

To Jo. Pringle, A. Maconochie, Neil Ferguſſon, Ro. Cragie, David Hume, Charles Hope, Ja. Oſwald, and David Boyle, Eſquires, Advocates.

I feel myſelf called upon, in juſtice to myſelf, to communicate theſe Letters to you. I ſubmit the ſentiments therein contained to your judgment and feeling, and to that manly and independent ſpirit which has hitherto characterized the Faculty of Advocates, truſting that the period of its extinction is not yet arrived.

I have the honour to be, with the greateſt reſpect and regard, Gentlemen, your moſt obedient humble ſervant,

HENRY ERSKINE.

KENT.

Maidſtone, 5th Dec. 1795.

A Meeting of this County having been convened, in purſuance of public notice, and having acted, as on all other occaſions, as Aſſiſtant to, and Repreſentative of, the Sheriff, I beg leave to ſtate to the County at large the proceedings of this day.

After waiting nearly two hours, with a view of entering on the buſineſs of the day, and having invariably found that no diſcuſſion could take place, in conſequence of continued clamour, I felt myſelf under the neceſſity of diſſolving the Meeting. Having quitted my ſtation, as acting Sheriff, and being requeſted, by a great number of reſpectable Freeholders, to renew the Meeting, and to aſſemble at the Bell Inn, at Maidſtone, I acceded to the propoſal; and now ſubmit to the public the following Addreſs (ſee Appendix) and Reſolutions; propoſed by Sir Horace Mann, Bart. and ſeconded by Sir John Honeywood, Bart. which, at the above renewed Meeting, were unanimouſly adopted.

Reſolved, That copies of the above Addreſs be left at the offices of the Deputy Clerk of the Peace, at Maidſtone and Sevenoaks; at the houſes of Mr. Hodges and Mr. Sandys, Canterbury; Meſſrs. Ingles and Jemmett, Aſhford; Mr. Tappenden, Faverſham; Mr. Hodges, Eltham; Meſſrs. Twopenny, Rocheſter; Mr. Burr, Maidſtone; Mr. Scoones, Tunbridge; Mr. Willes, Cranbrooke; Mr. Williams, Dartford; Meſſrs. Evereſt and Martyr, Greenwich; Meſſrs. Evans and Sons, Graveſend; Mr. Holding, Bromley; and Mr. Dyne, Malling; for the ſignatures of ſuch Inhabitants of the County as chooſe to ſign the ſame.

That Sir Edward Knatchbull, Bart. one of the Members for this County, be requeſted to preſent the ſaid Addreſs to his Majeſty.

That Thanks be given to the High Sheriff for complying with the requiſition for a County Meeting.

That Thanks be given to Samuel Chambers, Eſq. for his upright, fair, and manly conduct this day.

SAMUEL CHAMBERS.

Copies of the Addreſs propoſed by Sir Horace Mann, and ſeconded by Sir John Honeywood (and not by Earl Stanhope) are left for ſignatures, at the St. Alban's Tavern, and the Nag's Head Inn, in the Borough; and will remain at thoſe places till Monday next.

Among others retired with the acting Sheriff from the Meeting in the High-ſtreet to the Bell, and concurred in the Addreſs moved by Sir Horace Mann, were the following perſons:—

Lord Sydney, Lord Romney, Lord Darnley, Lord Sondes, Lord Lewiſham, Lord G. Murray, Sir John Shaw, Sir H. Hawley, Sir H. Mann, Sir Edw. Knatchbull, Sir John Honeywood, Sir John Dyke, Sir Peter Burrell, Sir William

William Bifhop, G. Hatton, —— Geary, Geo. Foote, John Cole, T. Barrett, H. Oxendon, W. Hammond, T. W. Tayler, W. S. Coaft, R. Cobb, Thomas Beft, Geo. Beft, N. R. Toke, Thomas Brett, Lewis Cager, J. Joyne, G. Grenning, Fra. R. Auften, W. A. Moreland, Thomas Dyke, P. Dyke, James Chapman, O. Tilden, E. Auften, John Larkin, T. Smith, T. A. Donce, C. Haddock, E. Peach, G. W. Lewis, Robert Parker, Flint Stacey, Thomas Argles, John Montreffors, Thomas Montreffors, T. Rider, Charles Finch, Thomas Adams, T. Wildman, M. Lambard, William Deedes, John Deedes, William Woodgate, William Woodgate, jun. Henry Woodgate, John Tempeft, J. Aufhen, Thomas Wefton, P. Nouaille, P. Nouaille, jun. William Fairman, Thomas Turner, John Hinde, J. F. Claridge, Rev. Dr. Fairfax, Rev. Dr. Marriet, Dean of Rochefter, Archdeacon of Rochefter, Hon. and Rev. J. Marfhall, Rev. E. Hafted, Rev. R. Foote, Rev. W. Huffey, Rev. H. Bridges, Rev. —— Wollafton, Rev. —— Rafhley, Rev. William Horne, Rev. F. Dodfworth, Rev. —— Standen, Rev. William Style.

AT a moft numerous and refpectable Meeting of many Thoufands of the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy, Yeomen, Freeholders, and others, Inhabitants of the County of KENT, convened by the High Sheriff of the County, at the requifition of the Duke of Dorfet, Lord Amherft, and others, held the 5th day of December, 1795, at Maidftone, in the High-ftreet; the Town-hall not being near large enough to contain the Meeting.

The Sheriff being abfent; a debate arofe on the queftion, Who fhould take the Chair?—Earl Stanhope moved, that the Earl of Thanet do take the Chair. Sir Edward Knatchbull contended that the Sheriff Depute had a right to prefide at the Meeting—Earl Stanhope perfifted that the People had a right to chufe their own Chairman; upon which, Sir Edward Knatchbull moved, "That thofe who were of opinion that the Sheriff Depute has (from his Office) a right to prefide at the Meeting, do forthwith adjourn to the Bell Inn, at Maidftone." The faid motion being put, was unanimoufly carried.

One Twentieth part of the Meeting, or thereabouts, did thereupon adjourn to the Bell Inn. The Earl of Thanet was then chofen Chairman. Earl Stanhope then moved, and John Longley, Efq. (Recorder of the City of Rochefter) feconded the following Addrefs to his Majefty, and alfo the four firft Refolutions.

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble Addrefs of the Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Kent.

May it pleafe your Majefty,

We the underwritten Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of Kent, beg leave to approach your Majefty with fentiments of fincere concern for the late outrage and attack made againft your Majefty's Perfon, on the day your Majefty went to the Parliament Houfe, and to exprefs the happinefs we feel at your Majefty not having received any perfonal injury therefrom.

We muft, in duty to ourfelves, and to our Country, avail ourfelves of this opportunity, humbly to requeft your Majefty to take into confideration the prefent critical fituation of this nation, occafioned by the prefent difaftrous war, and the dangers which may refult from impending fcarcity, and fpeedily to adopt the moft effectual mode of averting calamities fo dreadful. And we

earneſtly entreat your Majeſty immediately to ſet on foot a negociation, in order to procure for this Country a ſpeedy, honourable, and laſting Peace.

The ſaid Addreſs paſſed with only two diſſentient voices.

It was then reſolved unanimouſly, That this Addreſs be preſented to his Majeſty by the worthy Repreſentative of this County, Filmer Honeywood, Eſq.

It was then reſolved unanimouſly, That this Meeting doth view with horror every attempt that can be made to deſtroy thoſe invaluable Rights of the People, the Freedom of Speech, and the Liberty of the Preſs.

It was then reſolved (with eight diſſentient voices), That this Meeting doth view, with great diſſatisfaction, the two moſt odious and unconſtitutional Bills, lately introduced into Parliament by Lord Grenville and by Mr. Pitt.

It was then reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Earl of Thanet, for his fair, candid, and impartial conduct in the Chair.

It was then reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Earl Stanhope, for his ſpirited and conſtitutional conduct in ſupport of the Rights of the People.

It was reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to John Longley, Eſq. for having ably ſeconded the Motions brought forward at this Meeting.

It was laſtly reſolved unanimouſly, That this Meeting do now adjourn.

By order of the Meeting, THANET, Chairman.

KENTISH COUNTY MEETING.

THIS Meeting, held at Maidſtone, Dec. 5, 1795, was called by the High Sheriff all Inhabitants, as well as Freeholders, were invited by him, and it was held in the open air. It was by far the moſt numerous and reſpectable ever known in that County.

The victory obtained by the friends of Peace and Liberty will be long remembered with ſatisfaction by the people; and with the deepeſt chagrin by the minority (not one twentieth part of the Meeting) who ſeceded to the Bell Inn.

Earl Stanhope reprobated, with much animation, the War, and the two execrable Bills brought into Parliament by Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt. He moved the above Addreſs and Reſolutions, which were ſigned by the Earl of Thanet, who was in the Chair.

It is only neceſſary to add, that after the ſeceſſion of Sir Edward Knatchbull and his ſmall party, the Meeting was conducted with the greateſt order and regularity.

The Earl of Darnley ſpoke againſt the continuance of the preſent War, and the manner in which it had been conducted.

Roper Head, Eſq. an independent Magiſtrate of Kent, declared his abhorrence of the two Bills now pending in Parliament, and that if ever he ſhould be called to act under them, it would be with the greateſt regret and concern. He ſolemnly declared, that, at all times, he would diſpenſe prompt and impartial juſtice to the poor as well as the rich.

Mr. Dyson made an able ſpeech againſt the meaſures of the preſent Adminiſtration, and pointed out the very critical ſituation of the country by the rapid and alarming increaſe of the National Debt.

Robert

ROBERT PARKER, Efq. contended that the Bills had been much mifrepre-fented, and that they were, in fact, no grievance, as the matter would eventually be determined by a Jury.

JEREMIAH JOYCE fhewed the fallacy of Mr. Parker's reafoning, and proved, that "*under exifting circumftances*" men might be, nay men had been, wrong-fully accufed, and cruelly imprifoned without a poffibility of redrefs.

So fplendid and complete a victory has never yet perhaps been obtained by the Friends of Liberty in this country.

P. S. FILMER HONEYWOOD, the independent Reprefentative of the county, attended the Meeting. He heartily concurred in, and with great ability fup-ported the Addrefs and Refolutions brought forward.

December 7, 1795.

AT a refpectable Meeting of Inhabitants being Freemen of London, held this Evening at the Paul's Head, Cateaton-ftreet, it was refolved unanimoufly,

Firft, That all the Houfeholders, Freemen of the City of London, prefent at this Meeting, do form themfelves into a Committee, to give every affift-ance in their power to fuch Gentlemen as will come forward as Candidates in the feveral Wards, to oppofe the re-election of thofe Common Council-men who voted in favour of two Bills now pending in Parliament, which we conceive are intended to impofe fuch reftraints on the Rights of Free Dif-cuffion, as, if paffed into laws, will amount to a flagrant violation of the Bill of Rights, and be deftructive to our deareft Rights as Freemen.

Second, That the names of all thofe Members of the Corporation of this City, who voted in favour of the faid two Bills, projected for accelerating the progrefs of defpotifm, be publifhed, in order that the Citizens of Lon-don, and the People at large, may know who have betrayed their unalienable rights, and forfeited their future confidence.

Third, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Five Patriotic Aldermen, and the Forty Common Councilmen, who, true to the rights of free-born fons of free-born fathers, voted in oppofition to the faid Minifterial devices, for fuppreffing the public opinion, concerning their corrupt, prodi-gal, and calamitous meafures.

Fourth, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Chairman for his impartial conduct, and that thefe Refolutions be publifhed in the News-papers.

F. WELDON, Chairman.

The Committee will meet on Friday evening next at the Paul's Head, at feven o'clock; and earneftly requeft the company of as many Gentlemen from the different Wards, as are difpofed to further the views of the above Refolutions.

[In confequence of this Meeting an oppofition took place in many of the Wards, and a few of the old Council were thrown out.]

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY.

MEETING IN MARY-LE-BONE FIELDS.

THE proceedings of yefterday gave an additional proof that every calum-nious affertion of Minifters and their adherents, of thefe meetings being feditious and tumultuous, is a direct and palpable falfehood. About twelve o'clock an immenfe crowd of people of all ranks were collected in the fields appointed for the meeting of the London Correfponding Society, and the Friends of Freedom and Reform. About one, the roftra were erected,

and

and the feveral fpeakers and readers of the different matters to be brought forward for the confideration and adoption of the meeting took their refpective places. It was announced from each of the roftra, that the General Committee of the Society had nominated Matthew Campbell Browne to the chair, if fuch nomination was agreeable to the meeting, which being anfwered with loud and repeated plaudits,

MATTHEW CAMPBELL BROWNE took the chair. He opened the bufinefs of the meeting by obferving, that it was not in the power of any words he could make ufe of to exprefs in a degree adequate to his feelings the high fenfe he entertained of the honour conferred on him by the meeting, in calling him to the diftinguifhed fituation in which he then was placed. At any time fuch a ftation would have been to him a matter of infinite fatisfaction, but at the prefent moment of univerfal alarm and anxiety, and when it was but too probable that this might be the laft free meeting of the people which fhould ever be collected under the prefent Conftitution, he could not but receive fuch a mark of particular efteem and confidence without feeling an exultation of heart, which it was poffible thofe who heard him might conceive, but which it was impoffible for him to exprefs. In order to deferve as much as might be the particular honour now conferred on him, he would proceed in as concife a manner as poffible to open to the meeting the feveral fubjects which were the immediate occafion of calling them together; and in doing this, he affured them, he would not take up more of their time than the nature of the cafe abfolutely required. He then adverted to the two Bills pending in Parliament, which he explained in a fair and impartial manner. He afferted, that the Bill of Lord Grenville was an extenfion of the treafon law, and alfo a fhameful and alarming extenfion of the punifhment of mifdemeanor, in the addition of tranfportation for feven years to Botany-Bay—to the ancient judgments pronounced upon the offence of—FINE, IMPRISONMENT, and PILLORY, for the fecond offence. With regard to the other—Mr Pitt's Bill--he contended that it was neither more nor lefs than a repeal of the Bill of Rights; and read the fifth article thereof in proof of his affertion.

He then called the attention of the meeting to the principles afferted by their anceftors at the Revolution, and defired them to make up their minds as to that point, whether they thought their anceftors were right or wrong ---the grand and leading principle of that event was the right of refiftance to oppreffion, and it remained with the prefent generation to fay, whether they deemed this right as effential to be afferted and maintained now as it was then. In fupport of this principle, the unfortunate Family of the Stuarts had been driven from the throne, and the prefent Family feated upon it. The queftion was reduced to a very narrow compafs; if the people of England had a right to refift oppreffion, and to drive the Stuarts from the throne--- they had moft undoubtedly a right to elect another Family to the throne: if they had not a right to drive away the Stuarts, then the natural inference was, that the Family of the Brunfwicks were Ufurpers; one of thefe two pofitions muft be admitted. He then particularly requefted the attention of the meeting, whilft he delivered his own opinion on this point, which he declared to be decifively in favour of the right of the people to refift oppreffion, and that the prefent Family were moft legally and conftitutionally feated on the throne, which he hoped they would long poffefs; but at the fame time he never loft fight of the principle, and he would affert and main-

tain to the end of his life, that at any period, no matter when, if ſuch ſhould ever unfortunately arrive, the ſame right ſtill remained undiminiſhed, to drive away in the ſame manner any family who ſhould dare to reſort to the ſame tyrannical and deſpotic meaſures which had brought on the downfall of the houſe of Stuart. Still, however, he begged the Meeting to conſider that they were bound to reflect in the moſt ſerious manner on the grand article of reſiſtance, and not for a moment to entertain the idea of the dreadful and dernier reſort, till every other legal, peaceable, and conſtitutional means were tried and found ineffectual. It was neceſſary for them to keep in mind, without ever loſing ſight of it, that nothing can exceed the enormity and diabolical tendency of theſe Bills; that they cut up by the very roots the beſt and deareſt Rights of Engliſhmen: and they ought to be particularly careful to inſtill into the breaſt of their children every degree of abhorrence and deteſtation to them. By the 5th Article of the Bill of Rights it is enacted, "That it is the right of the ſubjects to petition the King, and all commitments and proſecutions for ſuch petitioning are illegal." Here then, ſaid he, you ſee the moſt convincing proof that the Bill of Rights is repealed by Mr. Pitt's Bill; for how can we petition, unleſs we are allowed freely to meet and to communicate our ideas on the nature of our grievances; and how can we freely ſtate theſe when a Magiſtrate is on the watch for the firſt word which he may think objectionable, and has the power to ſeize the ſpeaker, and immediately to diſſolve the meeting if he pleaſes. That the right to the end conveyed a right to the means, was the allowed and undeniable maxim in the law of every civilized nation; but here, in the preſent inſtance, it was impudently pretended that we had ſtill a right to the end, but the means were to all intents and purpoſes denied to us; or at leaſt they were clogged in ſuch a manner as to render them altogether vain and nugatory.

After touching upon ſeveral other points in a very forcible and animated manner, he proceeded to ſtate to the Meeting the ſeveral matters which were to be brought forward for their conſideration and approval: the firſt, he ſaid, was an Addreſs to the Nation on the preſent calamitous ſtate of affairs, and the danger to which their liberties were expoſed; the next was an Addreſs, Petition and Remonſtrance to the King, praying him to diſmiſs from his preſence and councils his preſent unconſtitutional Miniſters; and thirdly, a ſtring of Reſolutions, ſome of which applied in a particular manner to the preſent Bills, and others to return thanks to ſome highly diſtinguiſhed patriots in Parliament, who had oppoſed them with the moſt indefatigable zeal, and the moſt brilliant abilities, but, alas! without the ſmalleſt effect. He then requeſted that they would recollect the ſcandalous libels which had been induſtriouſly circulated againſt them by Miniſters in the preambles of theſe Bills, and in their ſpeeches that ſeditious and tumultuous Meetings had been held at Copenhagen-Houſe, and other places, and appealed to the recollection and juſtice of every one preſent if any thing could be farther from the truth. Such immenſe numbers had never been collected together before, and ſuch perfect order, regularity, and decorum, both in their meeting and parting, had never been known. They were allowed to be the wonder and admiration of the whole community who were within the poſſibility of receiving information on that head; and as they had ſo repeatedly gained honour to themſelves, and to the glorious cauſe they ſupported, by giving the lie direct to the falſe and infamous aſſertions of their adverſaries,

ries, he hoped they would this day add one more peaceful laurel to their brows; and that after ſhewing their firmneſs and reſolution in the proceedings of the day, they would crown the end of it by retiring to their homes in the ſame cool, deliberate, and patriotic manner, they had always hitherto done. The preſent deſperate and deſpotic meaſures, aided by the inevitable calamities conſequent on the war, muſt ſoon open the eyes of the great majority of the nation, and draw them all to the ſame central point; and whenever that day arrives, ſaid he, which cannot be far diſtant, that commanding voice has only to raiſe itſelf, and it is a farce and abſurdity to ſay it will not prevail.

The following Addreſs to the Nation was then read, amidſt the moſt general applauſe, and univerſally adopted by the Meeting.

TO THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN.

The Addreſs of many Thouſands, Inhabitants of London and its Vicinity, aſſociated with the London Correſponding Society, in Mary-le-bone Fields, on Monday Dec. 7, 1795.

Fellow Countrymen,

For nearly half a century the liberties upon which the glory and happineſs of Britain were eſtabliſhed, have been ſinking beneath a ſyſtem of political extravagance and corruption, which have not been ſurpaſſed under the moſt confirmed tyrannies of the worſt of times.

The moment is arrived when the views of an unprincipled Adminiſtration appear unmaſked. The Bill of Rights is trampled upon, and deputed tyrannies, like thoſe in the old ſyſtem of French deſpotiſm, is threatened, not only in every town and village, but even in the hitherto peaceful ſanctuaries of domeſtic retirement.

Shall theſe things be done, and ſeven millions aud a half of Britons breathe the ſame air that animated a Hampden, a Ruſſell, and a Sydney? ſhall they ſuffer their country, once formidable to tyrants, and boaſting of their deſcent from the worthies of a more determined æra, to ſink under ſlavery?

The eyes of the whole earth are fixed on Britain, as on a nation big with ſome great and inſtructive event. The poſture of affairs cannot long remain unaltered, and the time is come when ſhe muſt again diſplay all the maſculine energy of inſulted freedom, or become the ſcoff of mankind.

How varied have been the means by which too ſupine and credulous Britons have been betrayed!

War, ſtanding armies, and the inordinate waſte of public money, begot Exciſe, the Riot Act, the illegal violenceof what is called the Impreſs ſervice, and the Mutiny Bill; and the waſteful prodigality of the funding ſyſtem became a neceſſary conſequence of the fatal ravages of continental politics, in which we have been ſo deſperately and inceſſantly engaged; the national property diverted from the healthful channels of trade, and poured through thoſe of corruption, has, inſtead of animating with its natural vigour, produced the moſt baneful diſorders.

Nearly five hundred millions of Britiſh gold have been expended during the two laſt reigns, in wars with which the nation had no proper or juſtifiable concern, or by political intrigues utterly repugnant to its intereſts; near three millions of human beings have periſhed within the ſame period, through the ſame means; excluſive even of the Africans and Aſiatics who have fallen the victims of ſlavery and rapacity. The prices of the neceſſaries

of

of life, and the wages of the artifan and labourer, have fo difproportionately encreafed, that the utmoft affiduity will now fcarcely procure a third part of the neceffaries and comforts with which the induftrious part of the community could formerly preferve their ftrength, and provide recreation in the intervals of toil.

The *National Debt*, which even at the commencement of the prefent reign amounted only to eighty-eight *millions* and a half, has already fwelled to the enormous fum of *three hundred and ten millions!!!*—the annual burthen of *taxes, cuftoms*, and *excife*, which at the fame period was no more than *feven millions*, cannot be computed at lefs than *twenty millions*; while the *poor rates*, which, during the fpace of two hundred years, to the middle of the prefent century, had been found to encreafe only in a regular progreffion of between *four* or *five thoufand pounds* a year, have been fwelled, during the former part of the prefent reign, by an annual encreafe of between twenty and thirty thoufand, and during the latter part, of between fifty and fixty thoufand pounds!

Such has been the progrefs and fuch the confequences of the exifting fyftem of political œconomy, in the two important concerns of life and property;—but in the midft of fuch calamitous profufion, what have been the effects upon your liberties?

By the Mutiny Bill, the military were divided from the great body of citizens;—the facred right of Trial by Jury was torn from the foldier, and he was reduced to that vile condition in which the Roman people placed their flaves; he was deprived of opinion and liberty for life: if ordered by his fuperior officer to fire upon his own parents, a refufal would expofe him to the punifhment of death; and the moft trivial error in demeanour fubjects him to the ignominious lafh of the executioner; the Militia, originally eftablifhed upon principles profeffedly more free, have been gradually fubjected to all the odious reftrictions and penalties of the regular army, with an exception only to that of fervitude for life.

By the cruel practice of impreffing the hardy race of feamen, the glory of the Britifh nation, they are not only fubjected to a bondage and punifhment equally vile and arbitrary, but to the additional and ftill more atrocious violation of natural freedom, in being torn againft their will from their country, their connections, and their moft valuable avocations.

To fpeak of the Septennial Act, and that invafion of your conftitutional liberties the Riot Act, and the dangerous authority entrufted thereby in the hands of venal Magiftrates, would be entirely fuperfluous, at a time when meafures of a fimilar complexion, but diftinguifhed by features fo much more hideous and diftorted, are likely to be adopted, and perhaps enforced.

But thefe facts form a very little part of the evils refulting from the fyftem under which the nation fuffers; the enumeration of all would diftract the attention, and ficken the heart.

To remedy fuch evils, by the only means from which fuch remedy can be rationally expected, (a radical Reform in the Commons Houfe of Parliament) has the energy of the London Correfponding Society been ardently and folely directed from its inftitution to the prefent time; for this they have endured every fpecies of calumny and perfecution; for this have fome of their moft efteemed and valuable members been fent, like the vileft felons, to Botany-Bay; while others have been arraigned like ruffians and murderers at the bar of the Old Bailey;—where, thanks to the difcernment and inde-

independence of an Englifh Jury, their virtues have been fubftantiated, and the bafe practices of their perfecutors have been expofed.

But in the midft of thefe perfecutions, unawed by the power and malice of our opponents, we have perfevered with increafing ardour in purfuit of an object, upon the fuccefsful profecution of which muft ultimately depend the prefervation not only of the Conftitution, but of the liberties, independence, and political exiftence of the nation; the artifices of Minifterial calumniators, and the confequent terror of Alarmifts have, it is true, in fome degree, impeded the general diffufion of our principles, and checked the growth of thofe juft principles which are calculated to produce the happieft effects.

But the progrefs of truth, though impeded, was not totally obftructed; corruption was fhaken to the centre, and the ultimate triumph of the caufe of Parliamentary Reform (if things were left to the natural courfe of reafon and enquiry) became every day more obvious and certain.

The exorbitant emoluments of office; the lucrative advantages of patronage, and the unbounded gratification of Minifterial ambition, are however connected with the fyftem of Parliamentary corruption, and it is hardly to be expected, that thofe who are monopolifing the advantages of that corruption, fhould yield without a ftruggle to a Reform, which, however neceffary to the general falvation, muft detract from their confequence, and abridge their power and emolument.

Two Bills (part, we are told, of a regular digefted feries) have accordingly been fabricated upon models not derived from the principles of the glorious Revolution, but in direct hoftility to the Bill of Rights, the main inftrument by which that Revolution is diftinguifhed; and fupported by precedents not derived from the practices of the free and fettled Conftitution which that Revolution eftablifhed, but from the arbitrary expedients of thofe deteftable times, for the termination of which that Revolution was accomplifhed.

By thefe Bills (if ever they fhall be put into execution) the boafted liberty of fpeech is abrogated, that proverbial inviolability of domeftic fecurity, which has occafioned us to boaft that *every Englifhman's houfe is his caftle*, is for ever deftroyed; every venal Magiftrate is rendered an uncontroulable defpot, to differ from whom in political opinion may be attended with all the vexatious perfecution of domiciliary vifits, and expofe the peaceful afferters of Conftitutional Liberty to the horrors of military execution; while at the fame time all the jealous provifions of our anceftors to protect the people againft the oppreffion of ftate perfecutions are at once deftroyed; and the advocates of liberty and reform expofed to all the fury of Minifterial vengeance, and to penalties fo fanguinary and vindictive, as to be totally inconfiftent with that equity and moderation which has been fo frequently boafted as the diftinguifhing characteriftic of Englifh law.

Think not, however, that we fpeak to you in the language of trepidation or defpair. Believe not, Fellow Countrymen, that the introduction, or even the paffing of thefe Bills, is any argument of the decline of juft principles, or the confidence of Minifters in the refources of their own power, or the permanence of that fyftem of corruption to which they are attached. We agree with the fentiment of a late writer, whofe obfervation in this refpect is not the lefs true, or the lefs valuable, becaufe, in the affectation of extreme candour, he has illiberally attacked an inftitution, with whofe conduct and principles he feems to be totally unacquainted; that "the prefent intemperate effort (of the too eager advocates of authority) is not the act of

pre-

presumptuous confidence; it is dictated by a sentiment of despair!" Ministers behold with pain and confusion "how deeply more liberal principles of liberty have struck their root into the soil of Britain;" and the storm they have raised to destroy the hardy plant has confirmed the public confidence in its strength, and enabled it to spread still farther its vigorous branches. In plain and simple language, the discussion which these Bills have occasioned has roused the nation from its lethargy, has revealed in all their naked deformity the real objects of the Minister, and, in point of popular conviction, has occasioned a few short weeks to produce the effects which years of ordinary exertion could scarcely have equalled. At the same time we trust, nay, we may affirm we know, that the intrepid, and at the same time temperate manner, in which this Society has met the fury, and repelled the calumnies of the advocates of corruption, has essentially contributed to the removal of the prejudices so artfully propagated against the advocates of Reform, to shew the People who are the real friends of Constitutional Liberty, and who its hypocritical subverters; and to unite the Friends of the People's Liberties in one firm phalanx, which having reason for its weapon, Justice for its shield, and Freedom for its banner, cannot fail of being ultimately, nay, shortly triumphant, over every opposition which the fury of Ministerial corruption can direct against it. Be firm then—be active—be resolute. Let the rashness and fury of your enemies encrease your circumspection and temperance; and your temperance, as is the habit of that manly virtue, encrease the inflexibility of that courage, with which, as men and Britons, you are called upon to pursue the glorious cause of Liberty and Reform!

M. C. BROWNE, CHAIRMAN.
JOHN ASHLEY, SECRETARY.

Mr. THELWALL, who appeared emaciated, and labouring under severe indisposition, addressed the Meeting on two or three occasions. In alluding to the Bills, he said, that they would not be properly called laws, since the essential character of a law, is its agreement with principles of or emanating immediately from the Constitution; what does not so do, cannot by any construction be deemed legal acts; so that it would be first necessary to declare and establish a despotism, or that the Constitution established in 1688 is annihilated, before acts hostile to the liberties then confirmed can become lawful; he took notice of a part of the Address of the Friends of the People, passed on the 5th inst. wherein it is said, "the Trial by Jury may indeed subsist; but Juries by their oaths must conform to the laws prescribed, and under the form of freedom, the nation may be slaves;" this, he said, appeared to be an accidental error, for although the premises, if just, would naturally produce the consequences alleged, but exclusive of the unconstitutional character of the Bills, the oath of a Juror was his true guide, and that said, "you shall a true verdict give according to—NOT ACT OF PARLIAMENT—but the evidence."

A circumstance introduced the mention of the army; he said it had been apprehended by some weak persons that the military would be let loose upon the people, and civil bloodshed be the mode of free discussion, but that Ministers knew too well that men on changing a brown or a black coat for a red one, cannot throw off all the ties of kindred, the love of that liberty which they heard and lisped in early infancy, the dear and bland affection for their

their native country :—" would," he exclaimed, " that all the Britiſh ſoldiers in the country (for there are ſoldiers who are not Britiſh now among us) would all, all were here, and we confidently, unarmed as we are, with our boſoms open, our wives and children in our hands, ſhould meet them, firm and undaunted ; the feelings of Britons would glow in their boſoms, the mandate of military deſtruction would ſound in vain.—O countrymen, it would indeed be a triumph, a triumph which the enemies of our liberties even now tremblingly apprehend !"

The Petition to the King was then read, and unanimouſly adopted.

TO THE KING's MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

The humble Addreſs, Petition, and Remonſtrance of many Thouſands, Inhabitants of London, and its vicinity, aſſociated with the London Correſponding Society.

SIRE,

A few anxious weeks have paſſed ſince, in addition to our Addreſſes to the two other Branches of the Legiſlature, we determined to ſtate to your Majeſty the apprehenſions which had been excited in our minds, by the two Bills then newly introduced into Parliament.

Excluſive of the hopes which we entertained from your Majeſty's regard to the happineſs of the nation, and your own poſterity, we truſted, that our countrymen in general would teſtify their approbation of the ſentiments which we avowed, in terms ſo forcible, that it would be impoſſible for men who call themſelves the Repreſentatives of the People of Britain, to ſanction the meaſures which your Majeſty's Miniſters had propoſed.

In our expectations of the conduct of our countrymen, we have not been deceived. Never were propoſitions ſubmitted to the Britiſh Nation, which met with an oppoſition ſo decided, and ſo nearly unanimous. But we have hitherto ſeen little or no regard paid to their opinions, by your Majeſty's Miniſters or their adherents.

When we reflect on the behaviour of the people of Britain ; when we ſee them generally evincing the ſtrongeſt attachment to good order and true loyalty, we cannot but conſider the earneſtneſs with which your Majeſty's Miniſters have preſſed the adoption of theſe laws, as a teſtimony of their determination to deprive the people of the power to expreſs their wiſhes for the termination of the preſent war ; and, though we are not without hopes, your Majeſty's regard to the attachment of the people (by which alone the dignity of your family can be ſecured) will induce you to refuſe your ſanction to the two unconſtitutional Bills, which were the ſubject of our former Petition, we cannot, with due regard to our own diſtreſſed families, neglect to ſeize on this, perhaps the laſt, opportunity of freely, yet peaceably and reſpectfully, ſtating to your Majeſty, the calumnies under which our country now groans.

Such have been the effects of the enormous prices of the neceſſaries of life, that for many months paſt, perſons who in the uſual courſe of their affairs had a proſpect of ſecuring a comfortable proviſion for the debility of age, the education and future eſtabliſhment of their children, have ſeen, with anxious ſolicitude, the rapid approach of poverty. To thoſe of leſs advantageous circumſtances the diſtreſs has been aggravated in proportion as

as they had lefs of fuperfluity to relinquifh; and to the labouring poor it has caufed a general, and in many inftances a total privation of animal food, and of many other articles neceffary to fupport that degree of exertion to which they have been accuftomed in their feveral purfuits, and from which in a great meafure is derived the fuperiority of our cultivation and manufactures, the real fources of wealth and national grandeur.

We entreat your Majefty not to confider this ftatement as exaggerated. If it is yet unknown to you, a very fmall enquiry will convince you of its truth; and fatal indeed muft be the confequence, if the Nation fhould be compelled to believe that, though known, it is not regarded.

We are aware that your Majefty's Minifters are in the habit of denying that thefe melancholy events are caufed either by the War, or that growing corruption which under their adminiftration has advanced with fuch gigantic ftrides. But the evidence of the operation of the former of thefe caufes is written too plainly in the known defolation which has taken place in feveral of the moft fertile parts of Europe, and in the large quantity of provifions which are not only confumed but deftroyed in the courfe of naval and military operations.

And with refpect to the influence of the latter, can it be denied that places and penfions are increafing, while the mifery of the People is growing daily more and more intolerable, and that thefe penfions, and the falaries of thefe places, muft be levied by taxation, and confequently be deducted from the earnings of the poor man's labour.

From the attempts which your Majefty's Minifters have formerly made to wreft the exifting laws to fanguinary and vindictive purpofes; from their prefent endeavours to obtain laws more favourable to fuch purpofes; and from their obftinate perfeverance in the prefent War, we are convinced the fufferings of whole nations are looked on with unfeeling indifference, if not with cruel exultation.

Syftems of terror and cruelty have ever been repugnant to the humane and generous feelings of Britons, even when mafked under the pretence of attachment to thofe principles of Liberty which have been fo eminently cultivated by our forefathers; much lefs can it be expected that any fuch fyftem will be patiently endured, when obvioufly intended to fubvert every remaining principle of Liberty.

We, therefore, entreat your Majefty, as you tender the happinefs of mankind in general, of this country in particular, and as you wifh your memory to be refpected by pofterity, that you would difmifs your prefent Minifters from your prefence and councils; earneftly hoping, that, being advifed by men of more wifdom and humanity, your Majefty may be enabled to reftore the bleffings of Peace and concord to this impoverifhed and diftracted country.

Mr. Friend faid, that the Bills before Parliament were different from every other meafure that had been hitherto attempted in Parliament; the Acts of the Convention of 1688 went only to exchange the Monarch; thefe Bills attack the Liberties of the nation, and the foundation upon which the right of the prefent Monarch has been erected; it is not a bare alteration of the compact, but a new one, and the different parties muft now ftand to the principles which they have to affert.

Having

Having read and moved the firſt Reſolution, he ſaid, the unanimity with which it had been received was a ſtrong proof to his mind that we were not on the eve of loſing our liberties; that we are ſtill worthy of thoſe deeds done for us by our anceſtors, and of thoſe liberties which they handed down to us. But he ſaw from the loud voice with which the whole nation ſpoke on this occaſion, that the ſame virtuous feeling animated Engliſhmen to hand down thoſe liberties to their children, and their children's children.

After reading the ſecond Reſolution, &c. diſplaying how the Bills trifled with the temperate and patient feelings of Engliſhmen, he aſked if it muſt then become the hard and humbled ſtate of honeſt men, who filled with the love of liberty, and with veneration for the Conſtitution which they had ſo long enjoyed, that they muſt no longer talk of any abuſes, which, from the nature of things, muſt grow up in all human inſtitutions; but how much more hard for him who may feel contentment with his own Conſtitution, and muſt yet be precluded from praiſing that of any other.

As ſoon as Mr. Friend had finiſhed his obſervations upon the following Reſolutions, they were put one by one from the Chair, and unanimouſly adopted, amidſt ſhouts of applauſe.

I. Reſolved, That the Government of this country was on the abdication of James the Second, conſtituted on a declaration in writing, preſented by the Lords ſpiritual and temporal, and Commons aſſembled, at Weſtminſter, to William and Mary, Prince and Princeſs of Orange, in which declaration thirteen articles were inſiſted upon by the Lords and Commons, and allowed by the ſaid Prince and Princeſs, as the undoubted rights and liberties of the people of England; and all their ſucceſſors, and all perſons in authority under them, have legally held, and do now legally hold their pre-eminence, dignity, and authority, inaſmuch only as they conform to the ſaid thirteen articles, which are the teſts of loyal Governors and ſubjects, and the caſe of the Conſtitution of England.

II. Reſolved, That the Bills introduced into Parliament by Wm. Pitt and Lord Grenville, the one intituled, "a Bill for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies;" the other intituled, "a Bill for more effectually ſecuring his Majeſty's Perſon and Government," are a direct violation of the above-mentioned thirteen articles.

III. Reſolved, That any man, who, under pretence of legal authority, ſhall ſeize, or aid others in ſeizing, the perſon of an Engliſhman, peaceably delivering his ſentiments in any place, or manner, agreeably to the above-mentioned thirteen articles, or ſhall prevent any Engliſhman from meeting in any place, or manner, agreeably to the ſaid thirteen articles, is a ſtirrer up of ſedition and rebellion, and a traitor to his King and Country.

Mr. Richter then came forward, and in a very nervous and animated ſpeech, introduced the Reſolutions of Thanks. He gave the moſt convincing reaſons for adopting them, but the greateſt proof of their being, as we have ſaid, convincing, was, that they were received with the warmeſt applauſe, and unanimouſly agreed to.

Reſolved I. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to Charles Sturt, Eſq. M. P. for his manly vindication of the London Correſponding Society, and other friends of freedom, on preſenting their Petition to the Houſe of Commons againſt the aforeſaid Bills now depending in Parliament.

II. That

II. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Hon. T. Erſkine, M. P. for his eloquent and manly ſupport of the Conſtitution in oppoſition to the ſaid Bills, as well as for his general conduct both in and out of Parliament. And that he be aſſured we have engraved on our hearts, and will inſtil into our children that noble ſentiment—" We were born free, and by God we will not die ſlaves."

III. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, M. P. for his firm, determined, and unequivocal oppoſition to theſe Bills, both in and out of Parliament. And more eſpecially for his manly and conſtitutional declaration—" That neither the Commons, nor the Lords, nor the King, nor the three combined as the Legiſlature, can be conſidered as having power to enſlave the People; but that they may either ſeparately or unitedly do ſuch acts as would juſtify the reſiſtance of the People."

IV. That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Lauderdale, R. B. Sheridan, C. Grey, —— Whitbread, jun. Sir Joſ. Mawbey, and the other firm oppoſers of theſe Bills, in both Houſes of Parliament, for their unceaſing exertions to preſerve the peace and liberty of this country.

V. Reſolved, That the London Correſponding Society never will deviate from their original principles, whatever may be the conduct of their perſecutors.

The late declaration of the real principles of the London Correſponding Society, in anſwer to the various calumnies which have been circulated againſt them, was then read by Mr. Richter, was received with the greateſt applauſe, and unanimouſly adopted as the ſentiments and principles of the whole Meeting.

After this the laſt Reſolution was brought forward, viz. " That the London Correſponding Society will never deviate from their original principles, whatever may be the conduct of their perſecutors."

The Chairman begged the attention of the Meeting to a few obſervations he had to offer on the laſt Reſolution. The original principles of the London Correſponding Society, and of the Friends of Freedom, were a Parliamentary Reform. Theſe were ſome years ago the pretended principles of the immaculate and apoſtate W. Pitt, when he was hypocritically climbing upon the ſhoulders of the People to the high ſtation he now held. In proof of this he read the following paſſage from a ſpeech of that great Stateſman:

Mr. Pitt declared, on announcing his motion for a Parliamentary Reform in 1783, " That the ſtate of Parliamentary Repreſentation was altogether partial and inadequate; that the progreſs of an undue influence was alarming and ominous; that the true ſpirit of liberty had decayed; that the powers which check and controul the different branches of the Government were debilitated; that it was univerſally known and acknowledged that the Houſe of Commons had departed from the original ſpirit and rules of the Conſtitution; and that the people of England complained with reaſon and juſtice, that there ſubſiſted not between them and their repreſentatives that ſtrict community of intereſt and language which ought invariably to have prevailed."

He repeated the ſame ſentiments when in office, on occaſion of his motion for a Reform in Parliament, April 18, 1785, and ſupported it by ſuch a ſtriking picture of the degeneracy of this part of Government, that Mr.

Powis, who now is one of the first supporters of all his measures, accused him of having pronounced—"a funeral oration on the Constitution of his country."

These were at that time the principles openly and boldly asserted by the present Heaven-born Minister; but now that he finds that they are persevered in by thousands, with equal zeal, and much more sincerity, and that the public pay more regard to the efforts of the friends of Reform at this day, than they did to the suspected characters who then were loudest in clamouring for its support; those meetings, which in him and his coadjutors were perfectly innocent, nay, meritorious, are now highly offensive and seditious, though conducted with a decorum and order which is unexampled; and a gag is to be put upon the mouths of Englishmen, lest they should speak to each other the wholesome language of truth.

These Meetings have also, said he, been stiled seditious. Now it is allowed that sedition, as a specific crime, is an actual *non-descript* in this country; there is no such crime actually known to the laws of the land. Perhaps we have now an opportunity of giving a clue to it. As the precedents for the present Bills are drawn from the *good times* of the Stuarts, in all likelihood their ideas of sedition are the same. I will therefore beg leave to read you the definition given by that British Solomon, James I. on the nature of sedition. In a speech to the Committee of the House of Commons concerning some books which had been written by Cowel and Blackwood subversive of the Constitution, he compared the sovereignty of Princes to the power of the Deity; but concluded with this *salvo*, that however the power of Kings was absolute in general, yet in particular the Kings of England were restrained by their oath and the privileges of the People.

The speech is in the following words:—"The King's power," he tells them, "is in the hands of the Lord, who can create and destroy, make and unmake. So Kings can give life and death, judge all and be judged by none. They can exalt low things, and abase high things, making the subjects, like men at chess, a pawn to take a Bishop or a Knight. But all Kings, who are not tyrants, or perjured, will bind themselves within the limits of their laws: and those who persuade them to the contrary are vipers and pests both against them and the Commonwealth.—Yet, as it is blasphemy to dispute what GOD may do, so it is sedition in subjects to dispute what KINGS may do, in the height of their power." This, said he, is, I believe, the real and true touchstone of sedition of the present Ministers, and and it is worthy of the good times in which it was broached. He then thanked the Meeting most cordially for their great attention shewn to the several propositions submitted to their consideration, for their cool, candid, liberal, and determined conduct evinced throughout the whole transactions, and took leave of them by an assurance that he had no doubt, that as "the end crowns all," their separation would be as peaceable and decorous as their meeting and continuance together had been. He then quitted the Chair, and the innumerable concourse of people separated with that regularity, peace, and decorum, which is ever inseparable from those who value Freedom, and who know what are its most essential qualities.

PORTSMOUTH AND PORTSEA COUNTER PETITION.

Mr. Editor,

IN order that the public may form a true opinion of the meafures that Miniftry and their dependants have been obliged to adopt to procure Petitions in favour of the deteftable Bills now pending in Parliament, I have fent a lift and a defcription of the perfons who fet on foot the Counter Petition of the Inhabitants of Portfmouth and Portfea, which was prefented to the Houfe of Commons on Friday, the 27th of November, by Mr. Rofe, jun. in oppofition to that againft the Bills from the free and independent Inhabitants agreed to at a Public Meeting, confifting of near a thoufand perfons, and prefented by Mr. Erfkine, the 24th of November, I have fent this as a proof that comes within my own knowledge.

VERAX.

Elias Arnaud, (Chairman) father of the Collector.
E. B. Arnaud, Collector of the Cuftoms.
George Stiles, Clerk in the Cuftom Houfe.
J. Boyes, Officer in ditto.
J. C. Mottley, ditto in ditto.
R. Kent, was ditto in ditto, now fuperannuated.
T. Trotter, Phyfician to the Fleet.
T. Meik, ditto, to the Garrifon.
L. Tafwell, Surgeon to ditto.
H. Gibbs, ditto in the army.
J. Rickman, ditto of Marines.
W. S. Cooper, Agent Victualler.
Wm. Reeks, Clerk in the Victualling Office.
C. Hawker, ditto in the Dock Yard.
W. Grant, fon of the Clerk of Checque in the Dock Yard.
J. Crocker, Quarterman in the Dock Yard.
J. Johnftone, refident Commiffioner of Haflar Royal Hofpital.
J. Mottley, Barber to the Sick, at ditto.
T. Palmer, Purfer in the Navy and Agent to Forton Prifon.
A. Moody, Contractor for Corn.
J. Holmes, Ditto for Cartage.
G. Poore, ditto, under the Ordnance Office.
Wm. Mitchell, ditto for Cooperage.
J. Snook, ditto for Bifcuits.
D. Garrett, ditto for Beer to fupply Hilfea Barracks.
W. Garrett, ditto ditto.
G. Garrett, ditto ditto.
J. Deacon, ditto for Beer to fupply the Convicts.
W. Decon, ditto ditto.
J. Judfon, ditto for Bifcuit.
W. Hammond, ditto Army Cloathing.
Wm. Turner, Grocer to the Navy.
W. Greetham, jun. Deputy Judge Advocate.
George Gayton, Vice Admiral of the White.
R. P. Cooper, Yellow Admiral.
G. Grant, Purfer in the Navy.
W. Syme, Lieutenant in the Navy.
Wm. Howell, Chaplain in the Navy.

W. J.

W. J. Madden, Paymaſter and Captain of Marines.
S. Wilſon, late Sutler to the Marines.
H. Deacon, Officer in the Artillery.
T. Deacon, ditto.
J. T. Merrill, ſon of the Agent to Haſlar Hoſpital.
R. Wilks, one of the Fencible Cavalry.
Wm. Urry, ditto ditto.
H. Allen, ditto ditto.
J. Swinbourn, Penſioner.

WHIG CLUB OF ENGLAND,

CROWN AND ANCHOR TAVERN.

THIS Club held its ſecond Monthly Meeting for the ſeaſon, the EARL of DERBY in the Chair. A numerous company of the moſt illuſtrious perſons for rank, talents and character, were preſent, and the ſame vigour which animated their proceedings on the day when they called on the Britiſh People to arouſe themſelves to a ſenſe of the danger to which every thing that was dear to them was expoſed by Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville's Bills, was manifeſted. They unanimouſly confirmed the Reſolutions of the Extraordinary Meeting, and Mr. Erſkine, in a ſpeech of the fineſt eloquence that ever flowed even from his tongue, moved for another Special Meeting, to be held on Saturday the 19th of December, to deliberate on the proper meaſures to be taken in the new condition to which Engliſhmen were to be reduced by theſe laws.

MR. ADAM called the attention of the Club to the unprecedented acts which in every part of the United Kingdoms were reſorted to by Miniſters on occaſion of theſe Bills. Of all the outrages which the independent ſpirit of Britons ever ſuffered, the inſult offered to the Honourable Henry Erſkine by the Faculty of Advocates in Edinburgh, was the moſt glaring. The perſecutions which were carried on through the mean ſubſerviency of Revenue Officers, might be expected, but that a high and honourable body of learned men ſhould be drawn into ſuch a ſervice, was ſuch an inſtance of the temper and condition of the times, as would aſtoniſh every Engliſhman that heard him. He explained the unparalleled attack made on Mr. Henry Erſkine, and after a true and beautiful compliment to his fine talents, and virtuous zeal for the Conſtitution under which he was born free, he propoſed the health of Mr. Henry Erſkine, which was drank with enthuſiaſm.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9.

A PETITION was preſented from the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Lincoln, in favour of the Bills.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE called their Lordſhips attention to one of the moſt extraordinary proceedings, reſpecting the forms of the Houſe, which he believed had ever been adopted in that or any other Houſe of Parliament. Their Lordſhips had a few days ago rejected the Petition juſt preſented for informality, becauſe the

Sheriff had ſigned it in behalf of himſelf and others; and he had every reaſon to believe, that, inſtead of being ſent back to be re-ſigned by the Sheriff, it had been returned to that Houſe without the Sheriff having ſince ſeen it; by the dextrous application of a pair of ſciſſars, the words, "on behalf of himſelf and others," had been taken away; and the Sheriff's name exactly, as it appeared to him, the ſame as before in point of ſignature, remained where it was, only thus deprived of the company which he had before added to it. To that had been added ſix names, conſiſting, he had no doubt, of one of each of the deſcription of perſons mentioned in the ſtyle and title of the Petition, who had ſigned it in town; and that was introduced to their Lordſhips as the Petition of the Nobility, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Lincoln. Had a ſimilar tranſaction taken place reſpecting a bill of exchange, it would have been deemed little leſs than a forgery. His Lordſhip ſaid, he thought he was therefore not only ſtrictly juſtifiable in oppoſing this Petition from lying on the table, but in moving alſo for a Committee to inquire into the tranſaction of that Petition, which he contended was againſt all the forms of the Houſe.

The Lord Chancellor declared, he entertained a very different opinion on the ſubject; as the Petition was then ſigned by the Sheriff only in his own behalf and for himſelf, and by ſix others, who, amongſt them, contained the ſeveral deſcriptions of perſons mentioned as thoſe from whom the Petition came, it was certainly admiſſible to lie on the table.

The Earl of Lauderdale in reply ſaid, he was ſomewhat ſurpriſed at ſeeing a Noble and Learned Lord leave the Woolſack to defend a proceeding that was irregular and diſorderly. He conceived what had fallen from the Noble and Learned Lord was a miſapplication of the fact. He had no objection to the Petition being received as that of the Sheriff, but not as the Petition of the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Lincoln, which it profeſſed itſelf to be. If their Lordſhips permitted ſuch a fallacy to paſs, and countenanced it by ſuffering the Petition to lie on the table, they would open a door to diſorderly and irregular proceedings, that might be the cauſe of much future abuſe and inconvenience.

Lord Grenville declared, he did not ſee the force of the objection. There could be no objection to its lying on the table, as it was undoubtedly the Petition of thoſe who ſigned it, and as ſuch, if it contained no objectionable matter, was entitled to be received. The Petition purported to be from the Nobility, Clergy, Gentry, Freeholders, Tradeſmen, and Yeomanry of that county, and was

 regu-

regularly ſigned; and when he reflected upon the great reſpectability of the county, and the perſons from whom it came, he could not but recommend it as highly deſerving of their Lordſhips' notice, and meriting ſome weight in the buſineſs they were about to take into conſideration. His Lordſhip ſaid, he was glad to find the diſpoſition the Noble Earl had ſhewn for order, ſince it gave him room to hope that the Noble Earl would adopt his own doctrine in future, and that the Houſe would have the benefit of that order and regularity of which he had that day profeſſed himſelf the advocate.

The Earl of Lauderdale ſaid, he could not ſuffer the impreſſion to be left, that he was in the habit of being diſorderly. It did, indeed, ſo happen, that he was ſeldom ſo great a favourite with the majority of that Houſe, but there were Noble Lords ready enough to call him to order whenever he was in the leaſt irregular: it was, however, well known, that he had been conſtantly labouring for three years to prevent the Noble Secretary of State from infringing upon the orders of that Houſe, which was his invariable practice, as often as it ſuited his convenience.

Lord Sydney declared, he could not patiently hear ſuch a charge made againſt his Noble Friend, by a Noble Earl who had been repeatedly called to order himſelf within the period he had ſtated. With regard to the Petition, it had been, he inſiſted, objected to without any grounds whatever. It was true, that it had been informal when firſt preſented; would any Noble Lord ſay, that, if a ſignature was improperly made, a perſon was not to be allowed to correct it? This had been done, with the addition of ſome reſpectable names; and whether it was by cutting out the informal words, or in any other manner, he ſaw no difference, provided it was the Petition of thoſe who ſigned it.

The Earl of Derby thought the laſt Noble Speaker had brought it to the right point, namely, whether the alteration had been really made by the Gentleman who had originally ſigned, or by ſome other. For his part (but he would not preſume to ſpeak ſo confidently as that Noble Lord) he did not think the High Sheriff of Lincoln had been in London ſince the Petition had been firſt offered to be preſented.

The Earl of Moira ſaid, he thought the Petition ſufficiently orderly to be allowed to lie on the table; though he by no means conſidered it as agreeing with the title given it, or deſerving the weight which the Noble Secretary of State wiſhed to attach to it. It purported to be the unanimous Petition of the Nobility, Clergy, Gentry, &c. of the County of Lincoln; whereas, on looking into it,

it, he found there were no more than ſeven names: one of them was that of a Noble Lord; another, he believed was of the Clergy; and the reſt might fill up the other deſcriptions; but he did not ſee how they were to be taken as engroſſing the claſſes which the title deſcribed. He did not doubt but they were all reſpectable perſons, the Petition, nevertheleſs, muſt be conſidered as the Petition of thoſe ſeven perſons only.

The motion was negatived, and the Petition ordered to lie on the table.

The Earl of Derby preſented a Petition from the Merchants, Traders, and other Inhabitants of the town of Liverpool, which he moved might be read; after which, he ſaid, before he moved that it ſhould lie on the table, he wiſhed to be indulged with their Lordſhips attention while he gave a ſhort hiſtory of that Petition, and alſo the hiſtory of another Petition which he underſtood was then on the table, and which had been preſented by a Noble Lord in his Majeſty's councils (Lord Hawkeſbury) a few days ago, as a Counter Petition to that which had juſt been read. His Lordſhip ſaid, that the Petition which he had preſented contained as great a number of reſpectable names, both in point of property and character, as were to be found either in Liverpool or any other town in the kingdom; that, in point of numbers, it contained ſeveral thouſands; that it had been drawn up by perſons of the moſt eſtabliſhed reputation, and left at a certain place for ſignatures; that, in conſequence of this, a hand-bill, as falſe as it was ſcandalous, had been publiſhed, charging thoſe who favoured this Petition with unfair and unconſtitutional practices, on which ſeveral of the gentlemen, who were friends to this Petition, and whoſe names ſtood as high as any in the town, ſigned a requiſition to the Deputy Mayor (for it ſeemed the Mayor himſelf was in town about the other Petition) to call a Public Meeting, for the purpoſe of having the matter fairly and openly diſcuſſed, in order to aſcertain the unequivocal ſenſe of the people; that requiſition was, however, refuſed by the Deputy; and the reaſon he aſſigned for it was, that he had received a letter from the Mayor, who was in London, by the preceding night's poſt, informing him, that no ſuch meeting, if required, muſt be allowed to be called. The people, therefore, who were in favour of that Petition, and againſt the two Bills, were compelled to purſue the only mode left; and it continued at the ſame place for the ſignature of thoſe who were inclined to ſign it. The ſtory of the Counter Petition was briefly this: it had been ſet on foot by the Corporation, and other gentlemen of the town; and he had no doubt but there were a great number of moſt reſpectable names to it; at the ſame time, he knew

 from

from undoubted authority, that every ſpecies of artifice, deluſion, and influence, had been uſed to induce the people to ſign it. It had been carried about from houſe to houſe; and every means taken, both by threats and promiſes, to induce all deſcriptions of perſons belonging to the Cuſtom-Houſe and Exciſe, as well as all thoſe in the remoteſt degree connected with the Corporation, to put their names to it. He was ſorry to take up ſo much of the time of the Houſe in ſpeaking about the opinions of other perſons on the ſubject of theſe Bills, as he knew he ſhould have occaſion to treſpaſs on it that evening in delivering what were his own upon them: he would, therefore, not detain them longer at preſent, than by moving that the Petition do lie on the table—Ordered.

LORD HAWKESBURY ſaid, that as the Petition which he had preſented a few days ſince had been alluded to by the Noble Lord who ſpoke laſt, he could not avoid ſaying, that, on his return to town from the country, he found a letter from the Mayor of Liverpool, on his table, in which he requeſted leave to wait upon him; that he prepared to receive him as ſoon as poſſible; and when the Mayor came, he delivered him the Petition, aſſuring him that a great majority of the town was in favour of the Bills, and that the Petition was ſigned by 8000 perſons, who from the connection he held with the county palatine, had choſen him to preſent it. As to the circumſtances of the Petition being carried from houſe to houſe, it did not, in his conſideration, impeach the authority or the conſequence of the ſignatures in any way whatſoever; nor did he think that, becauſe the queſtion was diſcuſſed before 200,000 perſons, many of whom could not hear a ſingle argument adduced, that their approbation gave more weight to a Petition, than when it proceeded from a meeting more ſelect and leſs numerous.

THE EARL OF DERBY denied that the Petition preſented by the Noble Lord expreſſed the ſentiments of the Inhabitants, as the Petition preſented that day againſt the Bills was ſigned by 4000 reſpectable perſons.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD preſented Petitions from Plymouth Dock, and Stonehouſe, from Frome, Durham, and Newcaſtle-upon-Tyne; all againſt the Bills. Ordered to lie on the table.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK preſented a Petition from Nottingham againſt the Bills. Ordered to lie on the table.

THE DUKE OF PORTLAND preſented a Petition from Leeds in favour of the Bills. Ordered to lie on the table. His Grace then preſented a Petition to the ſame purport, from the Inhabitants of Edinburgh, ſigned by 3500 perſons.

THE

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE faid, that he could not give his confent to the Petition from Edinburgh lying on the table, till he had made a few remarks upon the fubject, and fhewed their Lordfhips what an amazing degree of influence, hitherto unheard-of, had been ufed to obtain it. He had a Petition of a direct contrary tendency to prefent to their Lordfhips on a future day, which had been adopted in the moft open and undifguifed manner, by calling a public meeting, fubmitting the nature of the two Bills to their confideration, and then leaving it at a certain place or places for the fignatures of thofe who chofe to put their names to it; and he prided himfelf highly in the reflection, that the fpirit and good fenfe of his countrymen was fuch, that, notwithftanding the extraordinary and unexampled influence he had adverted to, upwards of 8,000 had come boldly forward and figned it. That influence, he obferved, had been exerted againft men of the higheft and moft honourable ftations, and had extended itfelf through every rank and degree, even down to the chimney-fweeper. The meeting, to confider of the Petition which he had to prefent againft the Bills, had been called, he faid, at the particular inftance of a gentleman (among others) who was the brother of an eloquent, a learned, and a fplendid luminary in the profeffion of the law in this country. [Here a cry from the Minifterial Bench of *hear! hear!*] His Lordfhip faid, he did not well know what the meaning of that *hear*, *hear*, could be: he had faid nothing but what all the world, who knew the diftinguifhed character he was fpeaking of, would join with him in. [Another cry of *hear! hear!*] Was this vociferation intended, he faid, by way of denial of what he had faid? Was it aimed, by this cry of *hear*, *hear*, to deny the pre-eminent abilities of the gentleman he had alluded to (Mr. Erfkine)? Was it meant to caft imputation upon the foundnefs of his underftanding, the goodnefs of his heart, or the brilliancy of his head? If it was, he was bold to fay, that if the opinions of the people were to be taken by poll, throughout the country, he was fure the great majority, nay, almoft all, would agree with him in the juft and well-deferved epithets he had applied to him. The brother of this gentleman, who poffeffed abilities equally fhining, and whofe fair fame as an Advocate at the Scotch Bar ftood equally forward, and ranked in as high a line as thofe of his relation did here, had long held the higheft and moft honourable ftation at the Scotch Bar, which was the Dean of the Faculty of Advocates. This ftation he had filled for many years laft paft, with the higheft honour and reputation to himfelf, and the univerfal fatisfaction of the Faculty; having, however, fhewn himfelf active in promoting the meeting for the Petition againft thofe Bills, within a very few days a requifition was

 drawn

drawn up, and figned by a fet of men, every one of whom were in the confidence of, or held places under, the Government, addreffed to the Faculty, defiring them to remove or difmifs Mr. Henry Erfkine from that high and honourable ftation; and every means were at this moment exerting with the Faculty of Advocates, which influence and power could devife, to enforce this fhameful act of injuftice and tyranny, for daring to exprefs his opinion againft what he deemed Bills of oppreffion. When we fee influence openly, and without ceremony, faid he, exerted againft fuch a character, their Lordfhips, and the world at large, would eafily draw the inference, how effectually it would be ufed againft all thofe of inferior claffes; and he had heard from authority, which he could not doubt, that it had been extended in every poffible fhape down to the very loweft orders of the people. Having ftated this, the Earl apologized for having fo long detained the Houfe, faid he would referve what further he might have to fay on the fubject till he fhould prefent the Petition to which he had alluded.

THE EARL OF HOPETOUN defended the prefent Petition, as coming from the moft refpectable inhabitants of that city. He admitted that a Counter-Petition had been figned, but he faid he had heard with great concern, that an Honourable Relation of his had taken fo leading a part in it. If the Petition to be prefented hereafter by the Noble Earl really contained fo many fignatures as he had mentioned, he was much furprifed that the Noble Earl fhould have kept it back. His Lordfhip fpoke in terms of panegyric of the Faculty of Advocates, defcribing them as a moft refpectable body, and declaring that he was convinced they were actuated by no motives but thofe of propriety, and that fenfe of what was due to themfelves, which neceffarily ought to govern the conduct of every defcription of men entitled to the good opinion of the public.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE faid, it was neceffary to anfwer the infinuation by a fact: he had kept the Petition back merely becaufe he meant to enter at length refpecting it when he brought it forward.

The Petition was ordered to lie on the Table.

The Order of the Day for the fecond reading of the Bill to prevent Seditious Meetings having been read,

LORD GRENVILLE rofe, and reminded the Houfe, that he had on a former day introduced a Bill for the better Security of his Majefty's Perfon and Government, which had met with their Lordfhips' approbation. On that occafion, in candour and fairnefs, he had thought it incumbent on him to ftate, that it was one of the meafures which his Majefty's Government intended to bring forward

ward to guard the Conſtitution and protect the Liberties of the country; but it would be imperfect if not followed up by another Bill, which was more immediately calculated to meet the evils they were intended to remedy. That other meaſure was the preſent Bill, which had been received from the other Houſe, and was then brought forward for their Lordſhips diſcuſſion, namely, for the purpoſes of ſuppreſſing ſeditious meetings. The preſent Bill was therefore to provide for what the other Bill did not contain, viz. to ſecure the lives, the property, and the happineſs of the People of England, for which important object it would be found that exiſting laws did not ſufficiently provide. The neceſſity of applying ſome effectual reſtraint to the exiſting evils muſt be obvious to their Lordſhips; he would therefore refrain from impreſſing the truth of that ſentiment again and again on their feelings. He conſidered the preſent Bill as part of a ſyſtem for ſuppreſſing a great and alarming evil, an evil that not only threatened the property of the ſubject, but menaced the very exiſtence of the Conſtitution; an evil of which no man was ignorant, becauſe on that head their Lordſhips had held repeated debates: its publicity was notorious, and its effect, if not reſtrained, muſt involve the country in diſtraction, by the ſubverſion of the Conſtitution. The ſyſtem to overthrow all order had gradually been proceeding for three years, and during that time it had inceſſantly required the moſt ſerious and the moſt ſolemn deliberation of their Lordſhips. Therefore, it was a ſubject on which he did not mean to enter much at large. It was unneceſſary for their Lordſhips to deſcant on what was heard and ſeen. The fact was notorious and needed no comment. Their Lordſhips on a former occaſion had declared by their vote the exiſtence of a conſpiracy; the parties were brought to trial. Since that period had they abandoned their errors? On the contrary, no ſooner were the temporary checks removed, than the former buſineſs was reſumed, and new deſigns put in motion. Meetings had repeatedly been held; the ſame abominable principles were inculcated and diffuſed. Was any thing farther neceſſary to expoſe their miſchievous tendency, than to ſay, that Majeſty itſelf had been the object of their invective and abuſe? Inflammatory writings were conſtantly iſſuing from the preſs, and circulated with increaſing activity. Incredible pains had been taken to poiſon the minds of the people, and to alienate them from the Conſtitution, in the deſtruction of which alone, every ſpecies of wretchedneſs was conſummated. An effect of theſe doctrines and attempts had lately been exhibited in the attack made upon the Sovereign, which had excited univerſal horror and indignation; and which, in the opinion of the country, was aſcribed to theſe ſocieties.

The neceffity of remedying thefe evils was already recognized. What had already been done, was only affixing a feverer degree of punifhment to particular offences; it was next neceffary to employ legiflative meafures of prevention, and to ftrike at the root of the evil. Thefe felf-erected focieties had fpread themfelves and their poifon throughout the country; they had fucceeded in availing themfelves of the privileges of our free Conftitution to deftroy its exiftence. Could their Lordfhips forget that, through the machinations of fimilar focieties in France the Sovereignty was reduced, the King taken captive, he was hurried to prifon, and from that prifon he was led to the fcaffold? After all thefe enormities, the conduct of the French became the fubject of approbation to the focieties in this country; and Addreffes, in which the hopes were expreffed of a fpeedy Revolution in this country, announced their wifhes and their defigns. He would not detain the Houfe by ftating the prefent views of thefe focieties; he would only refer to their laft declaration, in which they profeffed an adherence to their former defigns. The Houfe were therefore called upon to apply the remedy which this fituation required.

It had been faid on a former occafion, that the laws guarded againft thefe principles; their Lordfhips were, however, convinced that was not the cafe; he therefore found himfelf juftified in faying, that new and adequate remedies muft be ufed to deftroy an evil of fuch magnitude. With fuch an evil it was perhaps impoffible effectually to contend, without appearing to encroach upon the privileges of the people. Even were this true in a confiderable degree, it was worthy of the wifdom of the Legiflature, worthy of the generofity of a great nation, to facrifice a part of the Conftitution to preferve the bleffings of the whole. Before entering farther into the difcuffion, he would wifh to ftate what the Bill really did. If this had been done at firft, he believed none of that clamour and oppofition to the Bills, which had been excited by mifreprefentation without doors, would have been heard of. He declared he had ever afferted, and valued the right of public difcuffion. He had thought it wife to have recourfe to it before he was a Member of that Houfe; he had even exercifed it on the prefent occafion. He did not condemn thofe who oppofed, for rendering them the fubject of public difcuffion, but he reprobated the means by which the oppofition to them had been excited. On the occafion when he had joined in a public meeting on the fubject of thefe Bills, he maintained that they did not prevent the exercife of free difcuffion, however mifreprefented by the enemies of the Bills. The object againft

againſt which they guarded, was not the free diſcuſſions in meetings called to debate on public grievances; theſe could ſtill be called in counties by the legal Magiſtrates, and in towns by the conſtituted Authorities, as at preſent. This, he mentioned, was the fact, in deſpite of the cloud of calumny circulated againſt the Bills. At theſe meetings the objects were known, and the freeholders were of that deſcription as required no reſtraint on their proceedings; but the preſent ſocieties, againſt whom the Bill was aimed, had only in view the ſubverſion of the Conſtitution. Thoſe meetings were unknown to the Conſtitution, which had of late taken place in the metropolis and its environs. Their objects and their principles were ſuch as required reſtraint; and theſe reſtraints could be provided for without in the leaſt infringing the rights of thoſe who met for the diſcuſſion of a public grievance. No man could ſay, that meetings of this deſcription ought not to be reſtrained, who valued his liberty or loved the Conſtitution. The preſent Bill affected this claſs of men alone; and all meetings would eſcape, which were ſanctioned by the proviſions made in the Act. The proviſions did not reſtrain thoſe who gave public notice to the Magiſtrate, where more than fifty meant to aſſemble; and what rational man would deny, where people aſſembled for the purpoſe of ſubverting the Conſtitution, and not to petition againſt a grievance, that in ſuch caſe ſuch meeting was dangerous and improper? The Magiſtrates, by the Bill, their Lordſhips would perceive, were empowered to arreſt any perſon offending againſt the law, and, in caſe of reſiſtance, to diſſolve the aſſembly: this, therefore, when people were not actuated by bad motives, could not be conſidered a hardſhip. There were evidently a number of deſperate individuals affiliated, who were the juſt object of alarm, for the purpoſe of alienating the people from the reſpect due to the Laws, to the Government, and to their happy Conſtitution.

Another part of the Bill went to another ſpecies of ſedition, and which, in his opinion, was no leſs to be dreaded for its miſchievous tendency than the other; that was to the regulation of political debates and lectures. The talents of the lecturer or orator were devoted to propagate ſedition and to calumniate Government. Who, therefore, would ſay that ſuch were not juſt objects of reſtraint? Was it then a hardſhip that ſuch places of public reſort ſhould be obliged to take out a licence, when even publicans were ſubject to a ſimilar reſtraint, to prevent the encouragement of licentious and wicked aſſemblies? The Stage alſo was ſubject to regulation. If men exerciſed their talents for the laudable purpoſe of inſtructing the people in a due regard to the Conſtitution,

in

in ſuch caſe the Magiſtrate was not juſtified to interpoſe his authority. Indeed it would be ſevere, where an individual derived a profit from the laudable exerciſe of his abilities, to refuſe him the advantage reſulting from the fair exertion of his talents. The Magiſtrate was to judge of the purpoſe and object, and would only interfere where the doctrines taught were dangerous and improper.

Such was the whole effect this Bill was to have, which had been magnified, by miſrepreſentation, into a meaſure calculated to ſap the foundation of Britiſh liberty. Was it poſſible, conſidering the preſſure of the times called for new meaſures, that Government could have adopted more lenient ones? In all periods of our hiſtory, inſtances were to be found of the evils ariſing from tumultuous aſſemblies; nay, the conſequence of one in the vicinity of this metropolis, in 1780, muſt be in their Lordſhips recollection; and that muſt ſhew, from the frequency with which they were now held, the abſolute neceſſity for their ſuppreſſion.

He would not then, he ſaid, enter into a ſcrupulous inveſtigation of the merits or demerits of the various Petitions. He would aſſure the Noble Earl, that nothing was farther from his mind than to deny the merit or depreciate the talents of a Learned Gentleman (Mr. Erſkine) to whom he had adverted in an early part of the evening; this much, however, he would ſay, that whatever his talents might be, the reſpectable body whom he repreſented did not ſuffer them to have any weight in their conſideration, when they ſaw him diſapprove of thoſe meaſures which they conceived neceſſary for the protection, nay, the very ſalvation, of the property and Conſtitution of the country. With reſpect to the reſtraint on public lectures, for the purpoſe of diſcuſſing ſedition, that could not be called a hardſhip; particularly when dramatic repreſentations were under the controul of a Licencer; and a reſtraint exiſted with reſpect to every place of public amuſement and public reſort. The laws, he maintained, were not, as they ſtood at preſent, ſufficient for the magnitude of the evil that exiſted; and the more he examined the Bills, the more he thought their Lordſhips were called upon to paſs them into a law.

The Earl of Derby ſaid, that had he conſidered the Bill in that harmleſs point of view in which the Noble Secretary had repreſented it, he would not have obtruded himſelf upon the patience of their Lordſhips; nor even would he have come forward, had he not conſidered the meaſure as ſubverſive of every thing valuable and fundamental in the Conſtitution, and in our liberty. In ſuch a ſituation he could not be ſatisfied with a ſilent vote, but felt himſelf bound to oppoſe, in the moſt public and ſolemn manner, a

Bill of ſuch unexampled magnitude, and ſuch eventful conſequence. He had been educated in what were called Whig principles; and, from the matureſt conſideration of theſe, ever ſince he had arrived at years of diſcretion, he found himſelf at that moment zealouſly diſpoſed to vindicate, in his riper years, what he had imbibed in the more early periods of his life. Theſe principles led him at that time, as they had always done, to look up to the Revolution of 1688, as an event which fixed and eſtabliſhed the principles of liberty in our Conſtitution, and placed the foundation of the throne upon the rights of the People. At that period, the privilege of petitioning was demanded and received as a right eſſential to the People; and any attempt to take it away, or diminiſh its value, Engliſhmen ought to withſtand, as the deareſt principle on which their freedom was founded.

Would the noble Lord ſtate popular meetings, from which the public opinion was to be gathered, as unknown to the Conſtitution? He would not be ſo ſolicitous to prove the antiquity as the advantage of the practice. The American war, the moſt impolitic and diſaſtrous in which this nation had been ever engaged, except that in the conduct of which the noble Lord was concerned, had been ſhortened and concluded by the Petitions and Remonſtrances of ſuch meetings as the Noble Lord affected to hold ſo novel and unprecedented. Was not a Ruſſian war alſo lately prevented by the ſame means? A reſource which, after the paſſing of the Bill, the people would never be allowed to employ. But what arguments were given for a meaſure ſo formidable? The noble Lord talked of the neceſſity of the Bill, and that it did not entrench upon the rights of the people. Upon theſe points let the arguments reſt; he had no objection to join iſſue with him upon both. As to the neceſſity, where was the proof of it? He hoped he ſhould not appear uncivil in ſaying, that the noble Lord's high-toned declamation upon the evils of the French Revolution, with which the Houſe had been ſo often entertained, and his ſtatement of the inefficacy of the ſuſpenſion of the Habeas Corpus Act, were not at all ſatisfactory. He was not willing to diſpute the Noble Lord's aſſertions, which elſewhere he was ready to reſpect; but upon a matter of ſuch importance as this, he was not aſhamed to call for the proofs which the ſubject admitted. What had the Houſe to do with notoriety? The notoriety of facts in common life might, perhaps, be ſafely truſted; but was it decent, was it prudent, to act upon it in affairs of ſuch infinite concernment and importance?

It was ſaid that the ſocieties held in this metropolis adhered to their original principles. He was not acquainted with any body

belonging

belonging to these meetings; and he even disapproved highly of many publications in circulation; but he judged them from their own declarations. They complained bitterly, that their intentions were so much misrepresented, and their meaning so much misunderstood. It was maintained that they did not mean what they said; that when they mentioned Reform, they meant Revolution; when they spoke of equal laws, they were accused of wishing to effect equality of ranks and of property. They desired to be judged by a comparison of their actions and words, and challenged their enemies to point out an inconsistency. But were all the charges imputed to these societies proved, his opinion of the Bill would not be changed. He could not think of punishing the innocence of the many for the guilt of the few, nor give up the rights of the People because the general principle was abused. Where was the proof that the laws were inadequate? He disapproved of sedition; but were the laws for the prevention of it insufficient? Was sedition unknown to the history of this country? Was it a new crime? Was there not sedition and discontent in the days of King William and Queen Anne? Was not the principle of their Government arraigned and their persons endangered? Were there not afterwards powerful factions, and open rebellions; but did they ever, in the moment of real danger, think of such measures as this? Did they ever attempt to impose a restraint upon public discussion? They placed the Government on a firmer basis, upon the love, not upon the fear, of the subjects. They sought not to introduce any new law; but were contented with the prudent and active exercise of the power placed in their hands, to check the evil and remove the danger. They respected the Constitution, and preserved public privileges unimpaired. If the laws then were sufficient, was not the conduct of Ministers chargeable with the utmost supineness of guilt in not employing them.

He was not, the Earl said, apt to state bold accusations; but when he saw men attack one part of the Constitution, he was entitled to conclude that they would not spare the whole. He was entitled to conclude that they allowed sedition to increase, that they might find pretence for new laws, by which they might shackle the liberties of their country. He would not jumble the two Bills together, but he would say that their principle was the same. Still were there no laws? Was there not imprisonment? Were there not fines, examples of which might be mentioned, little to the praise of the lenience of the practice of the law? The person to whom the Noble Lord had alluded that night (Lord George Gordon) had perished in jail, to the utter disgrace of the law of this

country.

country. Was not the caſe of Mr. Walker, of Mancheſter, a ſufficient proof of its ſeverity? Would it then be ſaid that no adequate puniſhment exiſted for ſedition? No Magiſtrate, however, would act, no Jury would convict, upon the preſent Bill. Look at ſevere laws, and ſay whether they conduced to the attainment of their object. No Magiſtrate would even carry into force ſome part of the Riot Act, from which he perceived a great deal of the preſent Bill to be borrowed. If, however, it was neceſſary, why not produce the proof to juſtify the meaſure.

In the Riot Act, there was one clauſe in it, on which the Magiſtrates had never dared to act, had never attempted to bring an offender to conviction; and he defied an inſtance to be brought of any conviction being ever had upon it: that was the clauſe where any one perſon ſhould remain ſuch a time after it was read. It was the nature of all ſuch clauſes to defeat the ends for which they were made.

With regard to the principle and clauſes of the Bill, he was ſupported by great authorities when he gave them his pointed diſapprobation. He had converſed with many people on the ſubject, and the opinion he heard was unfavourable to the Bills, but eſpecially to the clauſe where ſuch latitude of power was allowed to the Magiſtrate. He ſtated the odious ſituation to which the Juſtices were reduced by it, and ſaid there were clauſes in the Act, under which no Magiſtrate of honour and reſpectability would agree to act. He himſelf had made enquiries on this head, among ſeveral moſt reſpectable Gentlemen in the Commiſſion of the Peace; and he declared, upon his honour, that every one of them had aſſured him they ſhould dread the idea of being obliged to act under the preſent Bills. He begged leave to read, as part of his ſpeech, an extract of a letter from a perſon of the higheſt character and the firſt talents, a Juſtice of the Peace of acute diſcernment and unimpeached integrity, a man of no political party, but ſteadily and firmly attached to his King and Country. The letter was moſt forcibly and ably written, and, in the ſtrongeſt and moſt eloquent language, deprecated the duty that the Bill, if it paſſed into a law, would impoſe upon Magiſtrates. Other Magiſtrates might be of a different opinion: but he did not think that the Petitions which had been preſented in their favour went ſpecifically to approve of the preſent Bills. The general purport of the letter was, "that he highly diſapproved of the meetings at Chalk-Farm and Copenhagen-Houſe, as well as the ſpeeches of Thelwall and others which were delivered at them. But why on this account ſtrike at the root of the

the liberties of Englishmen by these Bills? Why not commence vigorous prosecutions against them, and let those who were guilty suffer, and not in this manner punish the innocence of the many because of the imputed crimes of the few? At all events, let not the Justices be included in the Bills; put not them upon so painful a task as that of being the arbiters of the law, and the judging, by their own discretion, of the exact point of language in which shall commence criminality of intention. At least, if it must be so, let those who are now in the Commission be turned out, and others substituted, who may have made up their minds to the politics of the present day; for it seemed to him that the business and duty of a Magistrate would now be, instead of studying Burn's Justice and Dornford's Reports, to apply themselves assiduously to the effusions of Edmund Burke and the ravings of Thomas Paine; and the Commissions should only be made to continue during the existence of that Administration by which they were appointed." These were some of the leading features of one of the best and most energetic letters he ever read; with which, his Lordship said, he entirely coincided in every tittle, and which, he assured their Lordships, he would not have read to them, if this gentleman, whom he was proud and happy to call his friend, had not expressed it far better than he could have done himself.

When the Bill had been first introduced by a Right Honourable Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) in another place, in a speech of great fire and fury, the cloven foot had too soon appeared, and he had been since forced to admit of various qualifications. He wondered that a person of that Right Honourable Gentleman's ingenuity and penetration did not reflect upon the change which had taken place in the opinions of the public since the time when he ruled in the height of his omnipotence. That Right Honourable Gentleman forgot the change produced by a war, he would not say brought on, for he did not wish to cavil with the Noble Lord opposite to him (Lord Grenville), but a war continued by the pride and arrogance, and conducted by the folly and incapacity of Ministers; and that the people of this country were almost starving by the bungling system they had pursued. It was then found that it was necessary, by some concession, to restore the people to good humour, already revolting at the boldness of his designs; that it would be wiser to soften down what was disagreeable, and, by cajoling and artifice, to induce them to submit to an attack upon their liberties. He said he had never known men capable of resuming that part of their freedom which they had allowed to be abridged. The change in the duration of the Bill to him was

no

no great ſubject of conſolation. The people, who would ſubmit to be deprived of their rights for three years, might be eaſily reconciled to the utter deprivation. He that would be a ſlave even for an hour, had loſt the proud diſtinction and ardent principle of freedom. When chains were once impoſed, might not the Miniſter come with ſome affected pretences and artful colouring, to prolong the period of ſervitude till the principle became familiar to the mind? Were not all attacks upon liberty gradual and guarded? Thoſe who would not ſubmit at this time to give up all their right, might be cajoled at ſome future period to a ſurrender of the remainder. The Riot Act, according to Blackſtone, had firſt been introduced in the reign of Edward VI. had been revived with limitations under the ferocious and bloody reign of Mary, from which time it had ſlept till the reign of George II. when it was adopted for the ſecurity of the Family on the Throne, after reciting many additions, and creating new crimes. Upon the Riot Act, his Lordſhip ſaid, he would ſtate the opinion of Mr. Pulteney, as reported in Chandler's Debates. The words there ſtated to have been uſed by Mr. Pulteney were, "That he repented of having given his voice for the paſſing of that law; but his zeal for that Family, to which no one could doubt his attachment, had tranſported him beyond the bounds of propriety. Was paſſive obedience, he would aſk, to be eſtabliſhed by law in that Government which had been founded by reſiſtance? Engliſhmen could no longer be called a free people, if a Serjeant, at the head of a number of hirelings, was entitled to diſturb their aſſemblies, and expoſe them to military execution." Such was the opinion of Mr. Pulteney, which he had ſtated to ſhew the danger of precipitate zeal; in fact, he had read the extract to ſhew that the greateſt men might err, and be afterwards unhappy for what they had done. What ſevere reflections would it not produce, ſhould a period arrive when many of their Lordſhips, who act with the beſt intentions, would repent that they had given their voice for the preſent Bill, and lament too late that they had lightly ſanctioned a meaſure which overthrew the liberties of their country. He ſaw clearly that the Riot Act was the model on which they had framed the preſent Bill, though the preamble was different; and the reaſon was, that if the preamble of this Bill had been like that of the Riot Act they muſt have produced proof: the preamble of the Riot Act ſaid, "that ſuch and ſuch dangers had been *found* to exiſt," which ſhewed they had received proofs of it; but in the preamble to this Bill there were no ſuch words to be found.

In

In the consideration of some of the clauses of this Bill, this question presented itself, Was there no danger that even the exceptions of public meetings might become nugatory? Had we no instances of Magistrates refusing to convoke such assemblies? which, if they refused to do, the people, in the exercise of the right of discussing public topics, and petitioning against grievances, might be subjected to the penalties of the Bill. Any thing might be considered by a foolish or a corrupt Magistrate, as tending to "create dislike;" and even the intemperate language of a hired spy might furnish a pretence for dispersing the meeting.

The people of this country had a right to free discussion. It was a principle that he had ever recognised, with regard to all persons and every subject; and God forbid the contrary should ever be established. He conceived that the power which was vested in Magistrates, of seizing and carrying to punishment those in what were called unlawful assemblies, would take the offence without the cognizance of a Jury, and expose the culprit to arbitrary punishment. He trusted he had said enough to shew the bad effects of such a power in the various cases in which it might be exercised. On the whole, God only knew what would be the event of the present measures. He could hardly think it a less evil than those to be remedied by the Bill, to see the people of this country sink into listless apathy. The essence of the Government was then gone for ever; the principle of freedom would be extinguished. Ministers might taste a horrid gratification in the contemplation of the effects which their measures might produce: they might triumph in their success, and it was the only triumph they had to boast; he would not, however, envy them. The Earl said he had delivered his sentiments freely on a subject that had weighed him to the ground. He had discharged his duty imperfectly and inadequately, he would confess, but he was sure he had discharged it conscientiously. Whatever was the consequence he would say—

Victrix causa diis placuit, sed victa Catoni.

Ministers alone were the deities, however, to whom the victory would be acceptable. That Being who had created man for freedom, could never be gratified in seeing the purposes of his wisdom and goodness counteracted; nor could he fail to regard those with complacence who had honestly engaged in the cause of liberty and truth. The Earl returned his thanks to the House for their patience and indulgence, and then sat down, declaring that he should vote against the Bill in every stage of it.

The Earl of Westmoreland said, he was willing to share in all the *opprobrium* which had been cast on the framers of these Bills,

Bills, the neceſſity of which he fully felt, and if he had not otherwiſe been convinced of it, the oppoſition made to them would have proved it ſufficiently in that reſpect. The relation between the governors and governed was ſuch, that what the latter gave in allegiance, the former repaid in protection; and protection was beſt inſured by the preventive meaſures included in the preſent Bills. There were ambitious men, holding nightly meetings, to inculcate invidious diſtinctions between the rich and the poor, for no other purpoſe than to gratify their own rapacity.

"Ut jugulent homines ſurgunt de nocte latrones."

Againſt ſuch men reſtrictive meaſures were neceſſary. No King, he was convinced, ever reigned more in the hearts of his ſubjects than his preſent Majeſty. At a time like the preſent, however, the general affection of his ſubjects was not ſufficient to guard him and the Conſtitution againſt ambitious projects, their effects and their conſequences. The ſocieties, his Lordſhip ſaid, were the cauſe of the war, by the encouragement which they held forth to the enemy; and their efforts went alſo to prolong the war by the ſame means. He knew that apprehenſions were ſtrongly entertained by thoſe who did not underſtand the Bill. Many were taught to clamour for a peace, as the only mode of lowering the price of proviſions. The high price of corn was certainly not owing to the war, at leaſt not in a principal degree, the army and navy conſumed more animal food than bread, biſcuit, or flour, and if they were at home, the men muſt be fed, and the conſumption would be at leaſt the ſame, perhaps greater than while they were abroad, the probability being that while they were abroad, they derived the greateſt part of their proviſions from the countries immediately neareſt to their occaſional ſituation. There was undoubtedly always ſome waſte attendant on warlike operations, but that was not more peculiar to this war than any other. In France all the rich had been put to death; and the example was dangerous to England, where it would be better to ſend the people to the loom and the anvil, to make them indefatigable in the works of honeſt induſtry, than to ſuffer them to waſte their time and money by attendance on ſeditious meetings.

His Lordſhip ſpoke at large on the Riot Act, and traced the different treaſon and ſedition laws from the reign of Edward the Third to that of George the Second, diſplaying much knowledge of the Parliamentary hiſtory of the laws in being upon thoſe ſubjects. He entered into a diſcuſſion on the ſcarcity of corn, and the conſequent high price of it, declaring that an aggravation in both particulars was to be expected about the end of ſummer, unleſs large ſupplies were obtained from abroad, and therefore every meaſure that could be deviſed to reduce the conſumption was devoutly to be deſired.

The Earl concluded by expreffing his wifh that Parliament and men of property fhould unite to defend their eftates and liberties.

The Duke of Norfolk fpoke fhortly againft the Bill. It went in his opinion to forbid all popular meetings, unlefs convened by certain Magiftrates, and confequently to cramp and undermine the right of petitioning. How little reliance was to be placed on the affent of thofe Magiftrates appeared, he faid, in the conduct of the Sheriffs of York and Northumberland. The remedy, in his opinion, was worfe than the difeafe; and thence he concluded that the real object of the Bill was to eftablifh a State inquifition in the country.

Lord Boringdon faid, that whatever party in the other Houfe might have been the caufe of the length of time which the Bill had remained there, he equally rejoiced that its progrefs had been marked with that careful and becoming anxiety, which its importance fo juftly demanded. He did not think the delay which had taken place either ufelefs or vexatious; and he no lefs approved of its principle, than he rejoiced in its effect. Had the Bill been brought up for their Lordfhips confideration at a much earlier period of its exiftence, he fhould have felt great doubt and embarraffment in addreffing the Houfe upon the occafion. Such doubt would not have proceeded from any fluctuating opinion upon the merits of the Bill itfelf, but from the (he had almoft faid) national clamour which mifreprefentation had contrived to excite againft it. If the Members of the Legiflature were perfuaded that the main body of the nation was decidedly hoftile to any thing, he thought fuch a confideration ought in great meafure to influence them. He ftated the point to which mifreprefentation had been fuccefsful; and fpecified feveral inftances in which the groffeft falfhoods had at firft been thruft upon the public mind. The alterations which had taken place in the Bill itfelf, the proceedings which had taken place at a late meeting at York, and the innumerable Petitions which had recently been prefented in favour of the Bills, from the moft refpectable quarters, all tended to relieve him completely from any fuch embarraffment, as that which he had juft mentioned. He believed mifreprefentation to be entirely defeated, and the nation in general to be decidedly in favour of the meafure. Much ftrefs had been laid on the reality of the danger exifting in the country, and the mifchievous tendency of the focieties had been a good deal called in queftion, fince the focieties themfelves had taken fome pains to difown much of the libellous trafh which had been circulated about the country by Citizen Lee and others. He faid he did not wifh to criminate any

ſet of men whatever, by extracts from the ſpeeches of individuals, by any unjuſt inferences, or by any vague and unwarranted aſſertions. With the permiſſion of the Houſe he would read to them, not an extract from an individual ſpeech, or from an anonymous pamphlet, but three or four diſtinct and ſolemn reſolutions propoſed and paſſed within the laſt ſix weeks, by the London Correſponding Society, in the open air, and (as they aſſerted) with the acclamation of one or 200,000 perſons: Theſe reſolutions, he ſaid, bore the official ſignature of two Secretaries, and were circulated with great induſtry in different parts of the country. One of them, which he read, declared the only hope of the people to be in themſelves, and one of the others, which he read, notwithſtanding the undoubted and unfortunate certainty of the contrary, declared the late harveſt to have been very abundant. He aſked, whether the Legiſlature would not be guilty of a moſt criminal ſupineneſs, were it to take no meaſures for putting a ſtop to proceedings of ſuch a nature. He aſked, whether there ever was ſuch a thing heard of in the world as any ſociety whatever, aſſembling whenever it pleaſed 1 or 200,000 people, and telling them that all government was uſurpation, that all law was tyranny, and in ſhort, propoſing to them reſolutions ſimilar to thoſe which he had read to the Houſe; reſolutions, he ſaid, containing aſſertions as fallacious in theory, as they were poſitively falſe in fact. He lamented that the Noble Lords, who had ſpoken on the other ſide of the Houſe, had ſo cautiouſly abſtained from giving any opinion of their own on the ſubject of theſe ſocieties. He ſhould have been much gratified at hearing the fair and real opinion of thoſe who oppoſed the Bill, which he ſaid had avowedly, and in fact, for its object the ſuppreſſion of theſe different ſocieties. Thoſe who thought the Bill unneceſſary, muſt, by the faireſt inference, be ſuppoſed to think that the ſocieties were not dangerous to the liberties and to the tranquillity of the country. He contended that thoſe who had paid the ſmalleſt attention to the formation, to the principles, and to the conduct of theſe bodies, thoſe even who had not purpoſely ſhut their ears againſt what was matter of the greateſt notoriety to the whole country, all ſuch, he ſaid, muſt feel and know that they combine within themſelves as much art, activity, connection, and unity of deſign as ever threatened the exiſtence of any government or conſtitution whatever. That theſe ſocieties had been in being for two or three years, was no proof of weakneſs, or abſence of danger at the preſent moment: the only concluſion which could be drawn from this circumſtance was, that Government had hitherto uſed very great forbearance, and that it muſt be with great reluctance

 that

that they now came forward with the prefent meafure. He trufted that the Bill would prove efficacious; fhould it, however, turn out otherwife, as he thought the object the Legiflature had in view, was a wife, a juft, and a neceffary one, he hoped their Lordfhips would not be deterred from the right and conftant purfuit of it; he trufted that the country would feel confident under the exertions of its Parliament, that they would give it credit for zeal and firmnefs, *et intelligent multo nos vigilare acrius ad falutem, quam illi in perniciem reipublicæ.*

THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWN rofe, and began with declaring that, generally fpeaking, he difapproved of commenting on events in other countries, of which it was not very likely we could have more than an imperfect account, yet if ever it was juftifiable, perhaps the prefent was the crifis when circumftances did fomewhat juftify fuch a conduct. If he were to put himfelf in the fituation of Minifters, and afk whether affiliated focieties, fuch as the Jacobin Club, correfponding all over the country, were not to be confidered as caufe of apprehenfion, he would anfwer himfelf that they were, and were to be guarded againft as highly dangerous. It would be neceffary to examine the nature of the cafe under confideration. What, in fact, was Government? It was a thing founded completely and totally on public opinion; it could not be eftablifhed without it; and it fell to the ground as foon as that, its indifpenfible fupporter, had withdrawn its aid. The rank or condition of the perfons oppofing it was in his mind of little importance; nay, if the leader of any faction were the meaneft banker's clerk in the city, if he had addrefs enough to fway the popular will, the danger was equally imminent, and the call upon prevention equally urgent. And, indeed, when he contemplated the object which was prefented by a central Committee of this fort in the heart of a great country, affiliated with other focieties in moft of the principal towns of the kingdom, the fubject could not but demand fome attention from Minifters, could not but exact fome meafure of precaution for the fecurity of the Conftitution. When this declaration was heard, no one, he believed, would venture to ftyle him a favourer of Jacobinifm. Upon the fubject of the Petitions, the Marquis ftated, that meetings in general were of two forts: The firft, of the innocent and well-meaning claffes of the community, who, believing that they were aggrieved, made their remonftrances with warmth, though it might be with miftaken earneftnefs; and fuch petitions might be left fafely to evaporate, as the conviction that time would give would fufficiently anfwer them.

The other fort of meeting was one where real grievances did actually exift; and whatever might be done with refpect to the laft,

all

all remedies ſhort of removing the matter complained of would prove ineffectual. He could not, his Lordſhip ſaid, but recollect a caſe wherein he had once occaſion to take the advice of a phyſician, on account of a violent pain in his ſhoulder, who, upon being told that a brother of the faculty ſaid he could cure it in a certain way, replied, "and ſo can I: only it remains to be aſked, if the local ſeat of the diſorder be changed, in what part of the ſyſtem will it next break out? It may diſappear, but where will it go?" Where the diſeaſe was radical, the application of any ſuch correctives only ſhifted the ſeat of it; as, by the uſe of Goulard, or any other cooling medicine, the humour might be driven from the ſurface of the frame.

In the preſent inſtance, however, no wiſe man could deny that a grievance did exiſt in the inadequate repreſentation of the people: another queſtion aroſe upon the ſubject, viz. whether this was a proper moment to agitate it with a view to its redreſs? Undoubtedly the theory of the Britiſh Conſtitution was a noble one; the great queſtion was, whether, in the practice, this theory had not been ſo much departed from as to be nearly given up? He had never been a party man; and therefore was to be underſtood in all he ſhould ſay, as expreſſing merely the ſentiments of an individual. He had two objections to party; one was, that if he attached himſelf to any ſet of men, it would neceſſarily follow, that, at times, he muſt ſubmit his opinion to theirs, and this he diſliked; the other was, that he thought there was a ſomething in the idea of voting with party naturally and neceſſarily corrupt.

When he looked at the compoſition of the legiſlative powers, he ſaw them divided, generally ſpeaking, into two bodies; one conſtantly voting on the ſide of the Miniſter, and the other as uniformly voting with the party termed the Oppoſition. From hence reſulted a falſe inference, that the act of the Miniſter was the wiſh of the Sovereign, and that he who ſhould oppoſe any meaſure of the former was in perſonal oppoſition to the latter. If this was an error on the ſide of the Government, there was an error perfectly correſpondent on that of the people; they not unfrequently attributed to the principles and deſigns of men what, in fact, were meaſures attributable only to the ſtate of affairs. In the preſent criterion, therefore, what was to be done? When the aſſertion had been made, that this was no fit moment to bring forward any ſuch queſtion of grievance as he had deſcribed, he had agreed to it; but becauſe, by the violence of perſons cheriſhing French principles, the ſecurity of the Conſtitution had been menaced, in their care for a particular part, it was not the leſs incumbent upon their Lordſhips to be watchful that no one branch invaded the rights and

 privileges

privileges of the other; and he could not but ſee of late many alarming ſtrides of Prerogative manifeſted in the meaſures ſubmitted to that and the other Houſe of Parliament.

Admitting, as he did, therefore, the expediency of ſome meaſures the queſtion naturally preſented itſelf whether there might not be found a meaſure adapted to the occaſion, and yet ſhort of what was propoſed? His Lordſhip ſaid, he had not heard one defender of the preſent Act, who did not feel himſelf obliged to confeſs that it was an invaſion of thoſe moſt invaluable ground-works of Britiſh liberty, Magna Charta, and the Bill of Rights. By thoſe were recognized and eſtabliſhed the right of Petition and the right of Diſcuſſion. He confeſſed that many of the Petitions and Papers of the Societies alluded to were below notice; and obſerved how much had been made of the aſſertion that the preſent meaſure was grounded upon precedents. Some of theſe precedents were fetched from the reign of Elizabeth; and great and glorious as her reign confeſſedly was, yet, in the conſideration that ſhe inherited the arbitrary ſentiments characteriſtic of her father and all the Princes of the Tudor line, that was a ſufficient reaſon alone why precedents ſhould not be drawn from the reign of Elizabeth. If Miniſters were fond of her reign, why not copy the conduct of that wiſe Princeſs *mutatis mutandis*, and not obnoxiouſly? Mr. Hume ſays of that Sovereign, that, by adapting all her meaſures to the ſpirit of the times, ſhe ſucceeded in raiſing the country to a ſtate of unequalled glory and happineſs. Why, therefore, do they not copy her œconomy, recollecting that ſhe gave up her jewels, and was content to alienate even a part of the Crown lands, rather than lay oppreſſive and additional burthens upon the people? There was another and a ſtill ſtronger inſtance in her conduct touching the Reformation. We ſhould look at the temper ſhe diſplayed in the management of religious prejudices; and apply it as a rule for our conduct in the preſent emergency: the American and French Revolutions evinced that men would go as far upon the impulſe of a civil as a religious enthuſiaſm. Elizabeth never leaned too much to the Catholics nor to the Proteſtants, but gradually acquieſced in thoſe reforms which ſhe found the people wiſhed for, and which ſhe had wiſdom ſufficient to ſee were calculated to preſerve tke peace of the country, and to ſtrengthen her Government by making it more popular. It was by taking this judicious medium, that ſhe preſerved for us that moderate Church which it was our pride to poſſeſs; which he truſted would laſt as long as the Conſtitution itſelf; and that both would deſcend honoured and revered together to the end of time. Still leſs would any precedent apply drawn from the miſerable reign of

of Charles II. every year of which was marked with violations of the rights of the fubject and the liberties of the country.

Another matter much relied on in defence of the Bill, his Lordfhip obferved, was the plea of neceffity, and in reply to that it had been afked whether the exifting laws were not fufficient, without the innovation of the prefent branch of a new code? On that point, he had no hefitation in declaring it to be his belief, that no lawyer would fay that the exifting law was not adequate to the punifhment of any offences with which the Correfponding or any other Society, or any individual, were charged, or were likely to be charged. He wifhed that a Noble and Learned Lord (Lord Thurlow) would get up and deliver his opinion, which, though he had no longer a purfe in his hand, and a black coat on, no one refpected more than he did. He wifhed to hear him deliver his opinion, whether any new mode of prevention or punifhment were indifpenfably neceffary. A further authority to which he fhould refort was that of another Ex-Officer and Ex-Lord-Mayor, Mr. Alderman Skinner. That gentleman, whofe conduct merited the higheft praife of his fellow citizens, was continually teized by Government to call in the military, but he as conftantly had firmly refufed; and he found by experience that the civil power and the exifting laws were fully adequate to the prefervation of tranquillity, which was much better maintained during his mayoralty than during that of other perfons who had purfued a different line of conduct. Another proof of the adequacy of the laws was to be found in the fate of Mr. York, who had juft been fent to Dorchefter jail. The laws were fufficient to convict him of fedition, and to punifh him. If his feditious words were thus eafily come at, why not thofe of Mr. Thelwall, if he had really fpoken them? He would do every man juftice: he knew of nothing fo peculiarly flagitious in the affertions of Mr. Thelwall as to call for any peculiar punifhment. He had heard that Mr. Thelwall had affirmed Oppofition to be juft as bad as Miniftry, and that as little good was to be expected from them. This probably did not offend Government. He had alfo been told, that he had faid the Minifter was a notorious apoftate; of the truth of that affertion the public could judge: and he had affirmed, that the Minifter heaped falaries and penfions on himfelf and family, while the public was overburthened with taxes and debts: this was mere matter of arithmetic, which he left to others to calculate. Were he Minifter, the Marquis faid, he fhould certainly wifh to ftop fuch a man's mouth; and if he could not do it otherwife, he fhould probably do it by force. Although he was by no means the advocate of fuch men, was

Thelwall the only man who ſpoke unwelcome matters? He remembered reading a paper ſome time ago in a Newſpaper, to which was affixed the name of a moſt reſpectable gentleman. He ſaid, he alluded to Mr. Law, a gentleman who had left England for America, who had been a Member of the Aſſociation Club, at the head of which Mr. Reeves preſided, but who was ſo diſguſted at the arbitrary and partial proceedings of the Preſident, that he thought it neceſſary to aſſign his reaſons for quitting the Club in a letter which he publiſhed in the Morning Chronicle. [His Lordſhip read Mr. Law's letter, and animadverted upon it, accompanying his comments with much panegyric on Mr. Law.] "This, ſaid his Lordſhip, is a perfect Jacobin Club, which even uſes French phraſes, and ſays it is the *germ* of other ſocieties, and is a Committee of Correſpondence, that is, a London Correſponding Society. This Committee ſtill exiſts at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, and of courſe goes on in its old track: but I cannot bring myſelf to believe, that the man at the head of ſuch an inquiſition ſtill holds any place under Government. Miniſters will not, ſurely, dare to laviſh the public money on ſuch an enemy to the Conſtitution and Liberties of Engliſhmen." He imagined the Noble Secretary muſt have been abroad, and ſo never heard of this Society of Correſpondents, which recommended its ſuggeſtions, through the Solicitor for the Treaſury, to a gentleman on every account ſo eſtimable as the Attorney-General.

As to the King, no man could for a moment believe the exiſtence of any plot againſt him: a Government leſs vigilant than ours muſt inevitably have diſcovered it, if it had exiſted. He remembered, that when he was Secretary of State, in the year 1767, an Ambaſſador from Morocco, being about to return, waited upon him, and returned thanks in a ſet florid ſpeech for the civilities he had experienced in the country: but, "if I had been treated otherwiſe," ſaid he, "I ſhould have thought it my duty to have concealed the circumſtance from my Royal Maſter; for it is a maxim with me that Sovereign Princes ſhould live well together." So, ſaid the Marquis, I would have it with a Prince and his people; I would endeavour as much as poſſible to keep them friends: I never would excite ſuſpicions and jealouſies between them.

When the maniac, who was at this time in confinement, aſſaulted the Sovereign, he remembered that the King mounted his horſe the next day, and rode without attendants to Windſor. Such conduct he admired, as equally wiſe and magnanimous; and ſo well was he ſatisfied of the ſentiments of magnanimity which influ-

enced that auguſt Perſonage, that, after the late attack, which they all deplored, he would have had not the ſlighteſt objection to ride through the ſtreets of London; even if he had met with any one perſon, who, from ſuffering by the war, or under a grievous famine, or from the enormous preſſure of taxes, might have been led to ſhew an appearance of diſſatisfaction, the countenance of the King would of itſelf have diſarmed him by its benevolent expreſſion; and he might have ſaid, "None of theſe grievances are imputable to me; I grieve for your diſtreſs; but addreſs yourſelves to my Miniſters; they are reſponſible for every public meaſure."

The Marquis declared, that had he the opportunity as one of his Majeſty's Cabinet, or had he the ſtill higher honour of being entitled to ſtyle himſelf the *friend* of that Royal Perſonage, he ſhould think it equally his duty and his pride to adviſe him to come down to that Houſe, and give his diſſent to theſe Bills. If ſuch a conduct were purſued, if the wiſhes of the people were rather humoured than ſpurned at, then his Majeſty would be as popular as in 1782; when it might have been truly ſaid, that he reigned in the hearts of his people.

If theſe Bills paſſed, and were not executed, it would infallibly ſubject Government to contempt. If they were executed by the ſtipendiary Magiſtrates, they muſt be bold men to act upon the lights of Burn's Juſtice. God Almighty, in his donation of human faculties, uſually accompanied great warmth and intemperance with a deplorable want of judgment. When this was conſidered, was the diſcretionary power to be ſafely repoſed in hands ſo liable to be impure or wrongly directed? What he dreaded was the general gloom which theſe Bills would ſpread over the people; they would tend more than any thing to deſtroy that happy union of the loweſt with the higheſt, and arm the different orders with animoſity againſt each other. The Marquis added other arguments againſt the Bills, and concluded an ingenious and able ſpeech with expreſſing a wiſh, that the people would conſider the Bills in their proper light, and take every legal and conſtitutional means of obtaining their repeal, when a favourable opportunity offered.

Lord Mulgrave roſe immediately to reply, and began by ſingling out ſuch parts of the Marquis's ſpeech as did not, in his mind, apply to the queſtion before the Houſe, and diſpoſed of them with a few arguments urged by way of refutation of each; he then proceeded to defend the Bills from the imputation of being unconſtitutional, or an attack on the liberties of the People. He proved from an accurate hiſtorical detail of all the various precedents of meaſures

measures of a similar nature and purport that had been proposed by Government, adopted by each House of Parliament, and sanctioned by the Legislature, for many reigns past down to the 13th of Charles the Second, that the principle of the Bills was not new, but that our ancestors, wisely adapting their laws to the circumstances of the times, had gone before us in the same track, and set the example, which the cogent necessity of the times made it the duty of Government to follow. The 13th of Charles the Second, his Lordship observed, among other clauses, contained one prohibiting any Petition with more than twenty names to it being presented. That was not altered or repealed by the Bill of Rights, and on the trial of Lord George Gordon it was held by the Judges that the clause was still in force.

His Lordship supported the present Bills by a variety of arguments, and contended, that although they gave additional strength and energy to Government in respect to the peculiar and characteristic mischiefs of the times, they ran parallel in principle with the existing laws on sedition and treason.

The Earl of Moira rose next, and said, that if the Noble Lord hoped to persuade the House into an opinion of the necessity of the Bill, he must think it very easy of persuasion, since he founded his hopes chiefly on the transactions of the societies. "I have no occasion to defend the London Corresponding Society (said his Lordship), as they devoted me to death for being an apostate from the cause of liberty. On the contrary, I agree with the Noble Marquis, that they justly excited alarm by their conduct in imitating the proceedings in France. Let me ask, however, whether their declarations were not openly made? And are not their publications openly circulated, with the names of Booksellers and Chairmen, whom it cannot be difficult to trace; why not therefore punish them if they have been guilty of any crime? Are informers wanting? I thought they were so plenty as to poison all free communication, all manly intercourse in society. Yes—they are so; and Ministers are in no want of them; but they have other views. Their offences have, perhaps, been suffered to go unpunished, in order to furnish a pretext for saying the laws are inadequate, and to terrify the people into an approbation of the present Bill.

"The Secretary of State has said, the Jacobins killed the King of France; and if some such measure as the present is not adopted, similar consequences may follow in this country. This is a sort of language which had been too much used of late. The measures of Ministers, and the safety of the King's Person, are always maintained to be inseparable; and they who do not agree in this opinion,

nion, are ſtigmatized as enemies of their Sovereign. This is a moſt unworthy creed, and it has deprived the King of his beſt adviſers. I think myſelf as zealous a friend of my King as any man within his dominions, and yet I think the greateſt ſervice I could do him, would be to entreat that he would not paſs this Bill. No man can think of the proud and imperious tone in which it was introduced, and contraſt that with what has ſince happened, without ſeeing that ſomething more was, and is intended, than is at preſent avowed; the alterations that have been made in the plan are only the mean ſubterfuges of checked arrogance. There is no one object profeſſed by this Bill, which cannot be obtained by an enforcement of the preſent laws; and conſidering how it is preſſed forward, I muſt conclude, that the powers which it will give are intended to be abuſed; the more eſpecially when I compare it with ſome late events and preſent circumſtances. Miniſters, ſeeing the growing unpopularity of the war, the dearneſs of proviſions, and the general indignation which their conduct has excited, ſeek by theſe meaſures to ſtifle their reſentment; but the Houſe ſhould be cautious of placing itſelf, by paſſing theſe Bills, in the ſituation of oppoſing the general voice of the People. A ſtrong Government has been ſpoken of, and I approve of a ſtrong Government; I approve of it, however, only when it is really calculated to benefit the nation at large; and this Bill makes a ſtrange thing of the Conſtitution: it expreſsly ſays, that nine-tenths of the People do not feel the bleſſings that it ſhowers down upon them, and therefore they muſt be deprived of its protection. If the Bill were to be well adminiſtered, it would not be quite ſo dreadful in its operation as we perceive it is intended it ſhould be. I ſay this, my Lords, becauſe the execution of it would be put into the hands of inferior Magiſtrates, who will be eaſily influenced by Adminiſtration; and to hope for any ſuch thing as freedom of petitioning is vain, if we attend to one Noble Lord's ſpeech (Lord Weſtmoreland), who has ſaid, that the great oppoſition made to the meaſure was a proof of its neceſſity. In this manner, any oppoſition to the meaſures of Government will always be deemed ſeditious, and will be looked on as a proof that the People ought not to be allowed the privilege of meeting to conſider of their grievances. If ſuch language be now held, it is eaſy to perceive what will be the fate of Petitioners hereafter. But I hope that it will be impoſſible to put the Bill fully into execution, as its unpopularity muſt increaſe every day. Modifications of it I diſregard; it is the principle itſelf that is obnoxious. The caſe of ſhip-money, which has handed down to poſterity the fame of Hampden, was not particularly oppreſſive at the

the moment; it was the principle which it eſtabliſhed that was dangerous. The Noble Lord (Lord Weſtmoreland) has ſaid, 'Send the people to the loom and the anvil, and there let them earn bread, inſtead of waſting time at Seditious Meetings.' I cannot believe the Almighty made any part of mankind merely to work, and to eat like beaſts. He has endowed all with reaſoning faculties, and given nothing that he did not intend to be uſed." His Lordſhip concluded an eloquent ſpeech with expreſſing his hope that the diviſion againſt ſo odious a meaſure would be great in number.

EARL SPENCER replied, and in anſwer to what he termed the ardour of the laſt ſpeaker ſaid, he was not amongſt the number of thoſe who wiſhed to abuſe the proviſions of the pending Bills, nor did he partake of the arrogance which had been in ſuch qualified terms attributed to their framers. Theſe Bills went to enact, that every meeting ſhould be public. How did that accord with the pen of a State inquiſition? Miniſters were at one time arraigned for not proſecuting offenders, and at another for proſecuting with too much rigour. He, for his part, was conſcious of having done no more than his duty.

LORD THURLOW began a grave and weighty argument on the ſubject of the Bill, with noticing the variety of miſconceptions that had taken place reſpecting it, and in no particular more than in the idea that it trenched upon that important principle of Britiſh liberty eſtabliſhed by the Bill of Rights, the right of the ſubject to diſcuſs public grievances, to petition, complain, or remonſtrate, or otherwiſe addreſs the King, or either or both Houſes of Parliament reſpecting them. So far from that being the caſe, the Bill ſet out with recognizing that principle in the plaineſt and broadeſt manner. Nothing could be more clear than that the Bill began by expreſſing that recognition in terms the moſt explicit; it was rather ſurprizing therefore, that any man who had read the Bill ſhould have ſuffered himſelf to have fallen into ſuch a palpable miſtake. In the courſe of the debate much, his Lordſhip obſerved, had been ſaid with reſpect to the different modes practiced to obtain Petitions for or againſt the Bill; long experience had taught him that on occaſions great and important as the preſent, where conſiderable difference of opinion prevailed, and both ſides were equally eager in ſtrengthening and ſupporting their own opinion by every poſſible means, a good deal of miſrepreſentation would be reſorted to. Perhaps, therefore, the faireſt way of conſidering the degree of weight due to the Petitions in general, was to hold, that the Petitions on one ſide of the queſtion were as much to be relied on as the Petitions

tions on the other. He was ready to acknowledge that he felt conſiderable reſpect for the opinion of the majority of the people, and thought it became the Legiſlature to pay attention to it, but that opinion was not at all times eaſy to be got at; it muſt, however, neceſſarily occur that the people at large had not the ſame means, nor the ſame opportunity of obtaining information reſpecting queſtions agitating in Parliament, that he had in his legiſlative capacity; and therefore, when he felt conviction on any particular public meaſure under deliberation before their Lordſhips, he ſhould govern his conduct by his own judgment and opinion, and not ſurrender either on light or looſe grounds. He could not by any means concur with thoſe Noble Lords who argued that the conſequences that had ariſen from the propagation of jacobinical principles in France, afforded a ſufficient juſtification for the Legiſlature of this country to enact new laws, with a view to the prevention of ſimilar effects here. He muſt ſay, he entertained a very different opinion. He thought they had nothing to do with what had paſſed in France, as far as related to any influence it ought to have on their proceedings in Parliament. It was their duty to govern their conduct in legiſlation, with a view to ſuch laws as were expedient and neceſſary to the good order, the well-being and the happineſs of the ſubjects of the Britiſh crown. The contrary doctrine appeared to him to be not only unfair in principle but impracticable in itſelf, as the genius and character of the two nations were extremely diſſimilar, and it was idle to ſuppoſe that the two countries were to be governed in the ſame way. The doctrine was beſides ſomewhat inſulting to Engliſhmen, whoſe loyalty was not more general than ſincere and ardent, and who were more likely to be induced by the horrors experienced in France, to abſtain from exceſſes that might lead to the ſame conſequences, than to make the conduct of the French the model of their imitation. With regard to what had paſſed in the ſocieties that had been ſo much alluded to, that was a matter of which he profeſſed to know nothing; if they had diſtributed improper or ſeditious papers, the preſent law would reach them with a ſufficient ſeverity of puniſhment. The caſe, however, was in his opinion not preciſely the ſame, in point of miſchievous effect, with reſpect to ſpeeches delivered at popular meetings; whenever he heard of a ſpeech before 30,000 perſons, the firſt thing that occurred to him was, that it was impoſſible that one thirtieth part of the audience could hear it; no great apprehenſion need therefore be entertained of the danger likely to reſult from ſuch harangues; writings or printed papers might be conveyed and circulated throughout the kingdom, and read again and again

deliberately

deliberately till the poifon worked, and produced thofe confequences moft to be dreaded. He would therefore have the laws in being enforced againft libellous and feditious writings, and he had no doubt they would be put an end to. The fpeeches in queftion he could fuppofe were infolent and impertinent, but were they fo dangerous as to call for the prefent Bill? It was the glory of the Englifh law, that there was no previous reftraint on the people in the exercife of the important privilege of meeting to difcufs grievances and petition Parliament refpecting them. That privilege ftood precifely on the fame ground with the freedom of the prefs. Its ufe was free and unreftrained, but its abufe was open to punifhment. Had it been otherwife, the freedom of the prefs, inftead of an advantage, would have been the moft intolerable tyranny. Montefquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, faid, that the exiftence of freedom in England depended on the freedom of Petition, and the freedom of the Prefs. If the people feel the preffure of particular laws, and are not at liberty to petition for their redrefs or remonftrate againft them, they are flaves indeed. To declare, therefore, that the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them, was as odious as it was fallacious, and when he faid that, he by no means intended any reflection on the Right Rev. Prelate, who, in the courfe of a recent debate had made ufe of the expreffion; the handfome, manly, and liberal explanation, which the Right Rev. Prelate had fince given of his meaning, and under what reftrictions he meant to apply the fentence, not only reflected the higheft honour on his own good fenfe and candour, but cured the declaration of all poffible exception.

The people had an undoubted right to interfere with the laws in the manner prefcribed by the Bill of Rights, and recognized by the prefent Bill; as far, therefore, as that went, the Bill was unobjectionable, but it was what followed that was to be deprecated. The reftraints thrown around the exercife of that conftitutional right which it broadly acknowledged were alarming and dreadful indeed. The Bill, therefore, was to be objected againft as eftablifhing a bad precedent, under countenance of which a variety of bad laws might creep into the State, and defile the pages of the ftatute book. He recollected that, fome years ago, (1782) when a motion for a Reform in Parliamentary Reprefentation had been rejected in the Houfe of Commons, and the previous queftion moved upon it, the people were immediately informed by men of celebrated characters, and popular weight in the country, that their petitions had been rejected by the mode held moft obnoxious, as the means of getting rid of a queftion of importance, and were called upon to meet in dif-

tricts

tricts, and to discuss the best means of rendering their application to the House more successful; but it was not then contended that their intention was to overawe Parliament, or to do more than to awaken in the people a due attention to a subject that involved their dearest and most invaluable rights. He recollected also, at the time when Mr. Wilkes was declared incapable of sitting in the House of Commons, though returned again for Middlesex, some people who were zealous in his cause went so far as to declare, that no resolution of the House would be binding, and no Act would be in force whilst Mr. Wilkes remained excluded. At different times he had heard doctrines broached, and insisted on, that were equally extravagant, serious, and alarming, but he did not remember to have ever once heard it hinted, that such Bills as the present were necessary to restrain them or fit to be introduced. The power and restraint of the existing laws had always hitherto been deemed sufficient for the correction of abuse, the punishment of offences, and the prevention of danger.

That being only the second reading of the Bill, his Lordship said he was aware that in point of strict order, he ought to confine himself solely to the consideration and discussion of its principle; but, perhaps, his then suggesting certain objections that he felt to particular provisions of the Bill, might facilitate their amendment in its next stage; he would therefore take that opportunity of mentioning them. He did not mean to charge Ministers with ill intentions, he supposed that they were perfectly pure; the Bill, however, was, for a Bill of that importance, liable to such objections in the wording of its clauses, and the latitude of their expressions, that it either betrayed great negligence in those who drew the Bill, or afforded suspicion of its originating in an awkward motive. The distinction taken between the different species of public meetings, was at least novel. It gave great powers to Justices, and though it recognized the right of the people to meet in order to discuss grievances, and petition, it surrounded the exercise of that right with restrictions equally unprecedented and severe. It mentioned descriptions of Magistrates and meetings which he could not comprehend the meaning of. What Officer was the Conveener of a county in Scotland? he had not before heard of such a person, and what was meant by a county meeting? He observed that the phrase was to be found in many of the Petitions on the Table, but the Law knew of no such meeting, and their Lordships well knew that no Petition purporting to be the Petition of a county meeting would be received by either House of Parliament. A meeting might, indeed, be held in a county, but it could not be stiled the Petition of this or that

county; the Houſe always received it as the Petition of thoſe individuals who ſubſcribed and annexed their ſignatures to it, and paid attention accordingly. The exceptions in favour of Corporations went on a wrong principle; Corporations were not conſtituted for the purpoſes of petitioning, and their Petitions, like thoſe of county meetings, would have no other recommendation, nor be entitled to weight and conſideration further than as the Petitions of thoſe who ſigned them, which was, indeed, the only proper way of conſidering all petitions. The powers given to the Juſtices under this Bill were great, novel, and liable to much and very ſerious abuſe. It would be ſtupid and idle in the Houſe to ſay that any body of men were immaculate, and it would be as fulſome, as it muſt neceſſarily be falſe, to pronounce an indiſcriminate panegyric on all the individuals of a large body. He was far from meaning to impute bad motives to any particular ſet of men, but they all knew that from particular circumſtances, there were men in the Commiſſion of the Peace more peculiarly liable to influence than others; he therefore thought that a ſpecial clauſe ſhould be introduced in the Bill, excepting the ſtipendiary Magiſtrates from exerciſing the extraordinary powers veſted in Juſtices, with reſpect to the diſperſion of meetings. Thoſe Magiſtrates to whom he had juſt alluded were conſtituted for expreſs purpoſes of local police, and to that duty they had better confine themſelves. Another material conſideration, his Lordſhip ſaid, was, the Bill gave Magiſtrates the power of taking all perſons into cuſtody, "who ſhould hold any diſcourſe for the purpoſe of inciting and ſtirring up the people to hatred and contempt of the perſon of his Majeſty, &c. or the Government and Conſtitution of this realm, as by law eſtabliſhed." If thoſe words were allowed to ſtand in the Bill, there was an end at once of all diſcuſſion with a view to Parliamentary Reform. How was it poſſible in agitating the queſtion of Parliamentary Reform to forbear mentioning the inequality in point of importance, inhabitants, &c. &c. between the county of Yorkſhire and the Borough of Old Sarum, without deriſion and ridicule, which might by an ignorant Magiſtrate be conſtrued "to incite hatred and contempt of the Government and Conſtitution as by law eſtabliſhed," and acting upon that miſconſtruction, he might take the party into cuſtody and diſſolve the meeting. It had been ſaid, that if the Magiſtrate exceeded or abuſed his authority, he was liable to puniſhment; but under what circumſtances would a proſecution come into court upon ſuch an occaſion? The proſecutor would come into court with a halter about his neck, and no man ſurely would riſque the carrying on ſuch a ſuit, unleſs he had a mind to be hanged.

His Lordſhip pointed out the diſtinction between the extent to which the proviſions of the Bill went, and that of the proviſions of the Act of Charles the Second, and the Act of George the Firſt, commonly called the Riot Act. By the latter, the perſons aſſembled for an unlawful purpoſe did not incur the penalty of felony, unleſs they continued together riotouſly and tumultuouſly for one hour after the Act had been read: by the preſent Bill, if an aſſembly, met for the mere diſcuſſion of public topics, continued together peaceably to the number of twelve or more for one hour after proclamation made, commanding them to diſperſe, they were guilty of felony, and the Magiſtrate was ordered to put them to death, or at leaſt ſaved harmleſs, if upon reſiſtance any of the perſons ſo continuing together loſt their lives. This, therefore, was in his mind an inſurmountable objection to the Bill, but excluſive of this grand objection, the authors of the Bill ſeemed to have paid no attention to the explicitneſs of its clauſes; and, in the language of the ſpecial pleaders, they had failed to "hit the bird in the eye." A penal law ſhould always be clear and explicit, whereas the language of the Bill was peculiarly vague and inconcluſive. Therefore although the Bill recognized the right of Petition, and affected to guarantee that liberty, it was at beſt a liberty in fetters. He ſincerely wiſhed that an eſſential abuſe of liberty ſhould be puniſhed; but the offenders ſhould be puniſhed in their proper character, and not degraded to the deſcription of felons, without any neceſſity ſufficient to warrant ſo ſevere a change of ſituation.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR ſaid, the greater part of the Noble and Learned Lord's ſpeech appeared to him to be a ſtrong argument to prove the propriety of the Bill's going to a Committee, when the clauſes might be debated, and any alterations thought neceſſary might be made: at preſent, however, the principle of the Bill was the ſole object of their conſideration. The Noble and Learned Lord had taken occaſion to ſay that the Legiſlature of this country ought not to make what paſſed in France a matter to influence their proceedings, nor to ground the laws they framed and enacted on it. He, on the contrary, maintained the neceſſity of obſerving it as a general rule. The Noble and Learned Lord had alſo ſaid, the genius and character of the two nations were diſſimilar, and that it was abſurd to ſuppoſe that the ſubjects of both could be governed by the ſame laws. Upon that principle he had refuſed to take a ſalutary warning from what had paſſed in a neighbouring kingdom. Was man, he would aſk, ſo different from man on the different ſides of the Channel, that ſimilar aſſociations in each profeſſing ſimilar principles, aſſuming the

ſame forms, and affecting the ſame ſtyle and terms, were not likely to be attended with ſimilar effects? Would the Proteſtant Divines of England declare that they apprehended nothing from the avowed Atheiſm and ſcandalous prophaneneſs practiſed in France? Would prudent politicians ſee no danger in the general confuſion, which would neceſſarily reſult from the propagation of doctrines and ſyſtems of Government deſtructive of all order, all ſubordination, all property, all ſecurity, and all happineſs? Would the Noble and Learned Lord venture to aſſert that they ought to remain ſupine in the midſt of the tribunes of the London Correſponding Society, in the midſt of ſeditious and inflammatory harangues, and libellous pamphlets and papers? The moſt vigilant Government could not keep pace with the actions of the ſociety in this country, which called for notice; heap proſecutions on proſecutions, there would be no uſe in it. It had ever been the practice of all wiſe Governments to anticipate and ſuperſede, by preventive regulations, in order to render the evil impracticable. He declared he was no enemy to the liberty of the preſs, ſo truly deſcribed by the Noble and Learned Lord; at the ſame time he muſt obſerve that the libels that had iſſued from it were beyond all bounds, and that it was lenity to introduce preventive laws. He was himſelf fully convinced, that it was wiſe to take a leſſon from the dark pages of the French Revolution, to conſider it as an inſtructive volume, and by a prudent and timely exerciſe of caution to avoid furniſhing materials for a ſimilar hiſtory in this country. Be it ever remembered, by what means that Revolution was brought about; that the minds of men were alienated from their Government by the machinations of a few artful perſons, at the very moment that they profeſſed the moſt enthuſiaſtic attachment to their Prince, and they were led on by degrees, firſt to the impriſonment, next to the overthrow of his Throne, and laſtly to the murder of their Sovereign. The ſame effects, and the ſame enormities might be produced in this country by the ſame means, if not timely prevented. We had affiliated ſocieties in this country. What were the views and principles avowed by the London Correſponding Society, a ſociety that had not denied their connection with the clubs in France. Let them trace the analogy between the conduct of the London Correſponding Society and the Jacobin Club of France. Let them obſerve the uſe the London Correſponding Society had made of the liberty of the preſs, and would any diſpaſſionate man ſay, as ſome Noble Lords had done, that the conduct of the London Correſponding Society was not at all ſimilar, and that there was not the leaſt, nor the ſmalleſt analogy between that conduct and the

conduct of the Jacobin Club. The London Correfponding Society called for a Reform, when it was clear a Revolution was their object. What had been the libellous and atrocious conduct of the hand-bills diftributed by the fociety; they defcribed the Conftitution and Government as a Monarchy, but not a Monarchy limited and free. The Houfe of Lords they pronounced ufelefs; the Commons corrupt, the Judges corrupt, and recommended to ftrike out of all the records the word Monarchy, and infert Commonwealth. According to them our laws were abfurd: and all indictments drawn up in the King's name were infamous libels, and infults on the people. "When they come to ftate what they mean by Reform, and bring forth their plans, (faid his Lordfhip,) they then tell us of univerfal fuffrage; that is, the univerfal, indefeafible right of men, which cannot be bartered away. In order to reform, they fay you muft put an end to boroughs and corporations, and divide the kingdom into fections: every perfon, except a Peer and a pauper, may vote at elections. Their language betrays them; when they can fecure a majority, they will then have a Conftitutional Affembly. Is not all this tending to involve us in the miferable ftate of France? Such are the notions which thefe focieties are attempting to diffeminate. By every method, they try to throw abufe and reproach upon the actual Government, and all its compotent parts, upon the Sovereign, the Houfe of Lords, which with them goes for nothing, as well as upon the Reprefentative Houfe of Commons. There is not an exifting circumftance of the Conftitution, but what is treated as an ufurpation, and bearing upon the rights of the people. If, indeed, it is fit that thefe focieties fhould lift their hand with that boldnefs they have done, it will be unneceffary to think of this or any other Bill, for the Legiflative functions will be taken out of your hands. The ftyle of their Petitions and Remonftrances difcover the fame dangerous fpirit, and the fame principles that have characterifed their whole conduct." He flattered himfelf that it was the wifh of a great majority of the Inhabitants of this country to preferve the Conftitution; where a contrary fpirit was manifefted, he was perfuaded it was chiefly to be afcribed to mifreprefentation. He warned the Houfe of the danger of being lulled into a fatal fecurity, and of winking any longer at fuch proceedings; the danger was real, and it might, he faid, come quicker than the apprehenfions of the moft timid might lead them to fuppofe, if not averted. In fact, under the exifting circumftances, it would be unwife in any Government to remain inactive, when it was fo neceffary to apply a preventive in time.

Experience had ſhewn that the exiſting laws were not ſufficient to put a ſtop to the evil; and thence aroſe the neceſſity for the preſent meaſures, which he muſt contend did not exceed that neceſſity, nor would he agree that the Bills would operate in the manner which thoſe who oppoſed them wiſhed to have it underſtood. The Noble and Learned Lord had himſelf admitted that the Bill allowed the right of petitioning, provided meetings for ſuch purpoſes confined themſelves within the bounds of diſcretion, and proceeded in an orderly manner. His Lordſhip adverted to the proviſions of the Bill; and obſerved that little was left to the diſcretion of a Magiſtrate. The ſubject matter of a meeting muſt be reduced to writing, ſigned by ſeven Houſeholders, which the Magiſtrate had to conſider, and was not left to act from ſudden impulſe. If he acted raſhly, and abuſed his truſt, he was amenable to higher powers, and ſtill a Jury had to decide on the charge againſt the ſuppoſed culprit: the man might be bailed; and, if he could ſhew a juſt cauſe, the perſon ſeized had his recourſe in law. The power of the Magiſtrate was not uncontroulable; after five days that meeting might aſſemble again; or, ſhould the Magiſtrate act from caprice, injuſtice, or corruption, any other two Juſtices might permit the aſſembly. It had been ſaid, indeed, that, without the aid of the Bill, it was the Magiſtrate's duty to arreſt a man ſpeaking treaſon; but he could do ſo the more effectually, when armed with the proviſions of the Bill: he might at preſent, indeed, arreſt a traitor; but how was he to be ſecured from a reſcue? There was nothing in the Bill by which the authority of the Magiſtrates could be attended with any real danger to an individual, unleſs where it ought to prove dangerous; if it were improperly applied, it would prove an injury to the Magiſtrate himſelf. His Lordſhip aſked, what was the ſituation of a Magiſtrate at that time, and what Magiſtrate had nerves and boldneſs enough to enforce the exiſting law without additional powers? He goes to ſuch a meeting; when there, if a perſon calls out "Spy and Informer," he and his Conſtables get huſtled and knocked down in the ſcuffle, not knowing or being able to aſcertain who ſtruck firſt. It cannot be expected that any Magiſtrate will run his head at ſuch a riſk into a mob. But by the Bill, when the Magiſtrate declares the purpoſe of the meeting to be within the reſtrictions of the Bill, it becomes the people's duty to diſperſe; and at their peril if they do not, according to ſimilar proviſions in the Riot Act; an Act which was paſſed ſoon after the acceſſion of the preſent Family to the Throne, and to which the preſervation of order in this country has been greatly owing; and I defy any man to produce a ſingle inſtance in which

that

that Act has been abused. It was no easy matter to convert an Act of Parliament into an abuse, because the law was strong enough to reach any abuse committed under the sanction of its authority. His Lordship added a variety of other pointed arguments in justification and support of the Bill.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE began his speech with a direct attack on the argument of the Noble and Learned Lord who had just sat down, which he arraigned in most of its parts, as a feeble and insufficient answer to the able speech of his Noble and Learned Friend (Lord Thurlow) who had with such powerful reasoning exposed the deformity of the Bill, and shewed incontrovertibly, that while it affected to recognize and secure the right of the subject, freely to discuss existing grievances, to petition, to complain, and to remonstrate respecting them, it put that right under such severe, harsh, and unprecedented restraints, that it might justly be said to have put that species of freedom in fetters. After recapitulating several of the most striking of the observations made by Lord Thurlow, his Lordship adverted to the argument of the Secretary of State, and animadverted upon it without reserve. Complaint, he observed, had been made by the Noble Secretary of great misrepresentation having been industriously held out with respect to the two Bills. That misrepresentation had, however, chiefly, he must contend, arisen from those who had brought them forward. One of the instances produced was, that no number of persons should be allowed to meet above the number of a family. That singular restriction had actually been an object in the contemplation of the mover of the Bill, and had been stated by him when he first opened it, though afterwards it was relinquished. No man could be guilty of more gross misrepresentation, with respect to the present Bill, than if he were to take a copy of the Bill for the better Security of his Majesty's Person, and affirm that was the Bill as amended in the Committee. Either Ministers were so rash in their attempts upon the rights of the people, as afterwards to be forced to desist from their enterprize, from a consciousness of their inability to carry it through, or they were so loose and indefinite in the description of their own acts, as to leave room for mistake and misapprehension. Except, therefore, he were capable of diving into the minds of the Noble Lords, and exerting a prophetic power with respect to what might be their future determination, it was impossible to give a just character of their measures. They were always found to concede exactly in proportion to the pressure upon them from the people; and it was impossible to mark the point of the concession at which they meant to stop, until they had ascertained

tained the degree of preſſure. His Lordſhip referred to the times of Charles II. from which the preſent Bill was taken. Had that reign been leſs diſtinguiſhed by riotous or tumultuous proceedings on account of the enactments of the Bill from which the preſent one was copied? Had ſeverity of puniſhment ever been found, in the contemplation of a wiſe Legiſlature, the moſt effectual method to check the enormity, or diminiſh the frequency, of crimes? In ſubſequent periods, when the right of petitioning had been exerciſed with conſiderable boldneſs and freedom, no miſchief or danger had been found to enſue.

A Noble Lord had, he obſerved, mentioned a theatrical licence, and ſtated it to be a reſtriction ſimilar to that impoſed by the preſent Bill. Had he been in Parliament when the Bill was brought in for that licence, he ſhould then have been found in the minority. He deſired their Lordſhips, however, to recollect the elegant and forcible ſpeech of Lord Cheſterfield upon that occaſion: That Noble Earl warned the Houſe not to deprive men, who had nothing but their talents to depend on, of an opportunity of acquiring their bread: adding, "thank God, your Lordſhips have ſomething more ſubſtantial than your talents to ſubſiſt on."

He declared he conſidered this meaſure as chiefly dangerous, becauſe it was connected with a ſyſtem of encroachment, in which every ſtep ought to be watched with the utmoſt jealouſy. One encroachment, it was obvious, was only intended to pave the way for another. It was ſaid that this Bill was meant only to laſt for three years. Did the Houſe, however, believe that Miniſters would ſtop there? At the expiration of the three years, it would be contended, that theſe meaſures had been attended with no danger to liberty; and ſome meaſure of a complexion ſtill more arbitrary would in all probability be propoſed. The Bill was not, in his opinion, ſo formidable as ſome Noble Lords had imagined, and the reaſon why he thought ſo, was becauſe its abſurdity defeated its miſchief. It was chiefly alarming, becauſe it broke the grand line of demarcation, and becauſe it paved the way for meaſures ſtill more dangerous to the liberty of the ſubject. For what purpoſes could it be ſuppoſed that a ſtab was aimed at the vitals of the Conſtitution, except with a view to its utter deſtruction? So much had the right of petitioning been reſpected in former times, that it had even been determined that Petitions containing libellous matter and libellous hand-bills, diſtributed at the door of the houſe, ſhould not be proſecuted. The Noble and Learned Lord, who ſeemed better acquainted with the French hiſtory than with Engliſh law, ſeemed nevertheleſs to have formed his notions of petitioning

titioning upon the maxims of Robefpierre, who paffed a decree againft petitioning, and reftrained it under very fevere penalties.

Another curious argument urged in favour of the Bill his Lordfhip faid was, that it tended to protect the Magiftrate in the execution of his duty. So far from this being likely to be the cafe, his own idea was that it would tend to render the functions of the Magiftrate more odious, and his perfon more infecure. It had been alfo faid that this Bill would give courage to the Magiftrates. He did not however fuppofe that there was any quality in the Bill which would communicate to the Magiftrate a frefh portion of valour, or fupply the deficiency of his nerves. The true ground of the Bill was this, Minifters having plunged the country into a fituation of unexampled calamity, having wafted its blood and treafure in the profecution of a fruitlefs and unprofitable war, in order to fcreen themfelves from the confequences of their mifconduct, had recourfe to thefe meafures in order to deprive the people of England of the right of remonftrance, and the privilege of complaint.

His Lordfhip adverted to the conduct of Minifters with refpect to the Loan, which he contended afforded a proof of the moft grofs incapacity on their part, an incapacity which had been attended with confequences as pernicious to the public as the moft fhamelefs corruption could have been. He mentioned the following anecdote: a Swedifh Minifter had a fon who was appointed to fome diplomatic fituation; the youth wifhed to decline the appointment, alledging his incapacity and want of experience: "Go, my fon (faid the father) you will find folly enough among ftatefmen to keep your errors in countenance; you will foon be convinced *quam parva fapientia mundus regitur*." Had he lived in the prefent times, and had the miffion of his fon been to a Britifh Court, in order to remove all apprehenfions with refpect to his incapacity, Lord Lauderdale obferved, it would have been neceffary for him to have faid, "Go to England."

The Earl of Mansfield faid, he would intrude upon their Lordfhips but for a few moments only. At that late hour he would not attempt to follow the Noble Earl through the variety of topics to which the Noble Earl had called their Lordfhips attention, much lefs would he attempt to copy the invective and declamation, in which the Noble Earl had fo copioufly indulged himfelf. Much, he obferved, had been faid in the courfe of the debate refpecting the Riot Act, which their Lordfhips would recollect had been paffed at a peculiar time and under peculiar circumftances. There was then a Popifh Pretender to the Throne, avowedly patronized by the French King and his Minifters; he thanked God there was no

Popiſh Pretender, nor any other, in exiſtence at preſent. When the Bill was originally paſſed, it was adapted to meet the difficulties and dangers of the moment, but our anceſtors had wiſely made it permanent. The Bill had anſwered its propoſed object ſo effectually, and been attended with ſo many eſſential advantages to the country, that he owned it was with a conſiderable degree of ſurpriſe that he had heard it ſpoken of in the light of an arbitrary and oppreſſive meaſure. A Noble Earl (Lord Derby) had ſeemed to have it in his view to caſt a cenſure on it, though it had always been conſidered as a good Bill by the beſt friends of the Conſtitution. What he had ſaid reſpecting the Riot Act might he was aware be diſtorted into an argument againſt the preſent Bill. He might be told, that the ſame neceſſity did not at this time exiſt that called for the Riot Act, and if there was danger to be apprehended, though of a different ſort, the proviſions of that Act might be put in force to prevent it. But ſuch an argument would neither be a fair one, nor would it bear examination, becauſe the moment it was inveſtigated it would be found to be by no means appoſite. There were not, it was true, a Popiſh Pretender to the Throne ſo auguſtly filled by our virtuous and excellent Sovereign, but there were ſocieties, whoſe affiliations throughout the kingdom on the principles of the French Jacobin clubs, threatened all thoſe ſerious and alarming dangers to the Government which had been deſcribed with ſuch impreſſive eloquence by the Noble Marquis. The Riot Act was not applicable to the much to be dreaded conſequences of their proceedings, and moſt eſpecially not applicable to the conduct which the affiliated ſocieties at preſent thought it prudent to hold, and which had been urged as a merit by ſome Noble Lords who choſe to defend the London Correſponding Society for the evident alteration in the temper and language of their proceedings. It was true, his Lordſhip ſaid, that it was the preſent policy of that Society to preſerve a more orderly conduct, to work by ſap rather than by ſtorm, by poiſon rather than by the ſword; but was the danger leſs becauſe the Society veiled its object and no longer braved the light of day, with an open and avowed diſregard and contempt of Government and of the various Branches of the Conſtitution? The Riot Act, if it could be enforced to diſperſe a meeting of an affiliated ſociety under the idea of its being an unlawful aſſembly, might indeed puniſh the individual who adminiſtered the deletereous draught, but it could not work a cure, it could not apply an antidote to the unfortunate man who had ſwallowed the poiſon, the fatal effects of which he would never be able to get rid of. His Lordſhip ſaid, that when a preventive meaſure of

the nature of the Bill under consideration was discussing, it was highly necessary to hold in remembrance what had passed within these few years in France, and especially, the events, as one of their great men had called it, of that never to be forgotten day, the 10th day of August, when the populace of Paris had in one night changed the form of their Government; nor those of the 5th of October, 1790, when a mob of men, women, and children, and men disguised in womens cloaths, went to Versailles in the night, brought their captive King to Paris, and kept him a prisoner till they led him to the scaffold, and there inhumanly murdered their Sovereign, a Sovereign the most mild, beneficent and humane, who dreaded more to shed a single drop of the blood of his subjects, than the effusion of his own. His Lordship commented on the calamities that had since fallen upon that unhappy people, and thence inferred the strong necessity on our part to endeavour to avert the same. He justified the Bill by declaring that every country was competent to take measures for its own security, and that no free States had ever existed, in which some restraints upon liberty had not obtained, all of which had been governed by the circumstances of the times. By referring to history, their Lordships would find it had been the case of Rome, of Athens, and of all the ancient Republics. The practice had been followed by our ancestors, and the same reason for resorting to it which led them to adopt it, prevailed in the extraordinary circumstances of the present extraordinary times, and rendered it highly expedient that the present Bill should be entertained, he should therefore vote for its going to a Committee.

Contents - 63	Proxies 46	109	
Non-contents 15	Proxies 6	21	
Adjourned.	Majority	88	

A List of the Minority who Voted against the Bill to prevent Seditious Meetings and Assemblies.

Dukes of	Norfolk	Earls of	Besborough
	Northumberland		Moira
	Bedford		Guildford
	Grafton		Shaftsbury
Marquis of	Lansdown		Thanet
Earls of	Derby	Lords	Say and Sele
	Lauderdale		Thurlow
	Suffolk		Chedworth
	Abingdon		St. John
	Albermale		Teynham.
	Egmont		

The Proxies were the Dukes of Northumberland and Grafton; Earls Guildford, Shaftsbury, Thanet, and Lord Teynham.

FIRST

FIRST PROTEST

AGAINST THE BILL ENTITULED AN ACT TO PREVENT SEDITIOUS MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES.

DISSENTIENT,

Becauſe, to preſent Petitions to the Throne and the two Houſes of Parliament has at all times been the undoubted right of the ſubjects of this realm; the free and unlimited enjoyment of which was one of the many bleſſings reſtored by the Revolution, and invariably continued in its fulleſt extent, as well during times of intended commotion as of external danger; we therefore cannot conſent to a Bill which thus fetters the Rights of the People, and impoſes reſtraints on that freedom of ſpeech, to the exiſtence of which the preſervation of all our Liberties may be aſcribed, and from the full, free, and continued exerciſe of which is derived the manly character that diſtinguiſhes a free people.

NORFOLK — ALBEMARLE
SUFFOLK — LAUDERDALE
LANSDOWNE — PONSONBY
DERBY — BEDFORD.
CHEDWORTH

SECOND PROTEST

AGAINST THE BILL TO PREVENT SEDITIOUS MEETINGS AND ASSEMBLIES.

DISSENTIENT,

1ſt, Becauſe, though we cordially agree in the above ground of Proteſt, yet we think it further neceſſary to ſtate, that

Although the Bill induſtriouſly diſplays the acknowledged right of Engliſhmen, a right eſſential to a free Conſtitution, of deliberating on grievances in Church or State, and of preferring to the King and each Houſe of Parliament petitions, complaints, remonſtrances and declarations thereupon, yet it proceeds to lay the whole exerciſe of that important and ſacred privilege under a reſtraint and diſcountenance, which directly and abſolutely annihilates the right.

The very propoſition of any matter which ſhall tend to incite or ſtir up the people to hatred or contempt of the Government and Conſtitution of this realm, as by law eſtabliſhed, makes the aſſembly liable to be diſperſed by any one Juſtice of the Peace, under the pain of felony, without benefit of Clergy, if any twelve remain together an hour after proclamation, even though they ſhould not proceed on the prohibited buſineſs. Nay, if any one Juſtice ſhall think fit to arreſt any perſon holding any diſcourſe to the above effect

effect, to be dealt with according to law, and shall meet with obstruction, whether the orator and obstructor be suborned or not, the whole assembly is liable to be treated in this harsh and unprecedented manner.

Now the case to which these terrible consequences are attached is unavoidable, being a necessary incident to the exercise of the right, for no grievance can be made the subject of deliberation, much less of complaint and remonstrance, without drawing down upon it that odium, which its injurious tendency, or that contempt which its absurd incongruity may seem to merit; that is, without representing it as a grievance. So that an occasion, even without straining, can never be wanting to suppress the exercise of this franchise.

2dly, Because the severe provisions of this Bill not only apply to all assemblies convened by the exertions of private subjects in the manner expresly claimed for Englishmen by the Bill of Rights, but to all the other assemblies mentioned in the Act, as appears from a consideration of the following words—" Such meeting or assembly, as is herein before mentioned, to which every Justice of Peace is authorised and empowered to resort with any number of Constables, or other Officers of the Peace, and to do, or order to be done, all such acts, matters, and things, as the case may require." Now although it be not expresly provided, that deliberating on any grievance in Church or State shall be deemed a crime, except in assemblies convened by private subjects, yet the above mentioned authority to arrest men holding discourse to such effect, to be dealt with according to law, do so flagrantly imply it, that the zeal of any Justice of the Peace, who should so understand the phrase, may regard this as affording ample countenance to his efforts. Happily, in the class of Magistrates in this country, are men whose worth and honour render them respectable, but we cannot forget that many are not only appointed by the Minister during his pleasure, but are in a state of apparent subjection to his caprice, and some, even paid by him for the exercise of their office, have their dependence on that caprice for their daily bread. It is therefore but too easy to foresee how such an occasion will be applied.

3dly, Because the provisions in the conclusion of this Bill, form a worthy sequel to the foregoing measures, differing not in principle but only in extent and application. The prohibition of unlicensed discoursing upon Law, Constitution, Government, and Policy, at meetings not sanctioned by the sacred occasion of a free people ap-

plying

plying to their Legiſlature, interrupts private inſtruction, and the freedom of private diſcourſe. The peruſal of books, recommended by univerſal eſteem, and the authority of names the moſt venerable is an indulgence, however, that ſtill remains. We are only forbidden to talk of what they contain.

We therefore think it our bounden duty, thus ſolemnly to mark the ignominious difference between this impaired ſtate of Engliſh liberty, and that which was ſo nobly demanded, and ſo honourably conceded, at the auſpicious æra of our happy and glorious Revolution. It is in vain that by the rapidity with which this Bill has proceeded, the petitions, complaints, remonſtrances, and other addreſſes of an irritated people, have been evaded. It is in vain to hope that the length of time for which it is to endure, will lay the public anxiety to ſleep. The people cannot ceaſe to regard this invaſion of their rights with grief and diſmay. They feel with us that even indifference would extinguiſh this fundamental franchiſe, this ſafeguard of all our liberties, for ever.

BEDFORD.
LAUDERDALE.
ALBERMARLE.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, DEC. 10.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD preſented a Petition from the Nobility, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the county of Bedford, againſt the Bill for the better ſecurity of his Majeſty's Perſon, and for the preventing of Seditious Aſſemblies; which being read, he moved that it might lie on the table.

THE EARL OF OSSORY thought it neceſſary to ſay a few words with reſpect to the Petition, it being very different from the one which he ſaid he ſhould have the honour of preſenting to the Houſe the next day, and which would really be what that purported to be, the ſenſe of the meeting of the county of Bedford. To ſhew that he was warranted in this aſſertion, he read the Advertiſement, ſigned by the High Sheriff, which called a meeting expreſsly of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders of the county. When they met in the Hall, the Earl ſaid, a great number of perſons of another deſcription intruded, on which a difference of opinion aroſe upon the queſtion, whether they ought to be admitted; and, as they certainly formed a majority of the aſſembly, he the High Sheriff, and a number of Freeholders, withdrew from it, when the

 Addreſs

Addreſs, juſt preſented, was propoſed by the Noble Duke, and ſigned by the perſons preſent; they might be Inhabitants, but certainly Inhabitants were not the deſcription of perſons called together by the High Sheriff.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD ſaid, he found it neceſſary to enter into ſome little detail reſpecting the meeting and Petition. About the 20th of November, a requiſition, ſigned by ſeveral Gentlemen of the county of Bedford, to which he ſaid, he added his name, was ſent to the High Sheriff, deſiring him to call a meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of that county, to addreſs his Majeſty on the late outrage on his perſon, to pray him to reſtore the bleſſings of Peace, and to take into conſideration the two Bills pending in Parliament. To this the High Sheriff returned him an anſwer, that he ſhould alter ſome words in the requiſition, and then he would call a meeting on the 4th of December; delaying it until that time that there might be full attendance. Could any man have ſuppoſed, that, by way of having full attendance, the High Sheriff intended to exclude that deſcription of perſons who reſided near the ſpot, and were likely to be numerous? yet ſuch omiſſion was certainly in his advertiſement, and ſuch, according to the Noble Earl's explanation, was his intention. This advertiſement appeared but a day or two before the meeting, when it was too late for him to make any remonſtrance. He attended the meeting as well as the Noble Earl. The High Sheriff opened the meeting with the Miniſterial argument of miſrepreſentation by thoſe who were againſt the Bills. After the High Sheriff had concluded, he would have yielded the propoſing the Addreſs to his Majeſty to the Noble Earl, if he would have confined it to that ſubject alone; but he rather choſe to withdraw with his friends to an inn in the town, and their Lordſhips were to underſtand a Petition there drawn up, in a private room, ſpoke the ſenſe of the County more fully than the Petition he had juſt preſented, which was procured at a public Meeting; and which, in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, had been ſigned by upwards of two thouſand three hundred perſons!

THE EARL OF OSSORY defended the character of the High Sheriff, and wondered, from the induſtry that had been uſed, there had not been a much larger number of ſignatures than that which the Noble Duke had ſtated it to contain. That the charge of miſrepreſentation was not ill founded, he begged leave to read a hand-bill, which, within eight and forty hours of the meeting, had been circulated with the utmoſt induſtry. [This bill, in the moſt forcible terms, ſtated the objections to the Bills which Oppoſition have conſtantly uſed.] The Earl declared he could not ſay the Noble

Noble Duke had any concern in this bill, although it bore his name; and some Gentlemen with whom he was connected, among them his Grace's Agent, were very active in its circulation.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD said, he knew nothing of the hand-bill produced by the Noble Earl; but so far was he from thinking it a gross misrepresentation, that, with the exception of one part, which related to the power of Magistrates, he would subscribe his name to it. The production of the hand-bill, however, led him to notice an advertisement which had since appeared, signed by the Noble Earl, among others, wherein the above meeting was termed a *promiscuous* multitude. He might as well have followed the example of the grand champion of their cause, and called it a *swinish* multitude at once. He did not mean to pretend that the Petition he had presented was not signed by the inhabitants; and he saw no reason why, because none but Freeholders could vote for Representatives, all other persons were to be supposed to have no rights whatever. So far was he from being of that opinion, that he would rather have the sentiments of an honest man, capable of judging, than of the richest merchant or contractor the kingdom could boast of. On some of their Lordships calling out *Hear! hear!* his Grace said, he would repeat it with the word *rather*, because the one would speak the honest dictates of his heart, while the other would be influenced by his interested connections.

LORD GRENVILLE rose, with much warmth, to defend the Gentleman alluded to (Mr. Burke), and was surprised that such an allusion should be made by the Noble Duke to the words swinish multitude, which, he said, was as infamous a misrepresentation as ever was made, and which the Noble Duke would see, if he perused the book: it might very well suit the purposes of Citizens Lee and Eaton, but it was beneath his Grace. His Lordship then insisted that great misrepresentations had been circulated with regard to these Bills, and doubted not but a majority, and a very large majority of the people, who were capable of judging, were in favour of them.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD insisted that the greatest misrepresentation had been on the part of Ministers.

THE DUKE OF LEEDS declared, that, to his knowledge, a great alarm had been spread on the introduction of these Bills, and that many persons in the country, who were averse to them, had withdrawn their opposition, fearful of the consequences that might ensue.

EARL SPENCER thought the fair interpretation of the Petition would be, that it was from part of the Nobility, &c. of the County,

County, and the Inhabitants of the Town of Bedford; in fact, that it was the Petition of thofe who had figned it.

The Earl of Ossory explained, that it had been fent to other parts of the country for fignatures.

The Petition was then ordered to lie on the table.

HOUSE of COMMONS.

THURSDAY, DEC. 10.

Mr. Milbank prefented a Petition from the Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders of the County of Durham, againft the two Bills.

Mr. Burden wifhed to ftate fome circumftances relative to the Petition. The Meeting was, he faid, advertifed on Saturday, and met on Monday, when the prefent Petition was voted. The interval was fo fhort that Gentlemen had not time to attend, and yet this Petition was ftated to contain the fenfe of the Gentlemen and Freeholders of that refpectable County. It was ftated to be figned by the Clergy alfo: feveral refpectable Clergymen refiding in that County, and, he believed, as many of that reverend profeffion figned the prefent Petition, as there had been of Bankers who figned that which was agreed to at the Paul's Head, Cateaton-ftreet. He then pulled out a factious and inflammatory hand-bill which was diffeminated for the purpofe of calling the Meeting, which he read to the Houfe.

Mr. Milbank faid the Petition would fpeak for itfelf. The language was refpectable, firm, and moderate; the prayer was fuch as that Houfe was accuftomed to receive on fuch occafions, and the fignatures were numerous and refpectable. The meeting was publicly made known, and if thofe that wifhed to oppofe the Petition did not attend, it was not the fault of the Petitioners. If thofe that were in favour of the Bills did not chufe to attend at the Meeting, what was the meaning that they did not call one of their own? They did not, and the old proverb was good, "Silence gives confent." The Honourable Gentleman had told him of the hand-bill, which he had juft read, and faid he fhould entertain the Houfe with it: the Houfe had heard it read, and he obferved that they derived much entertainment from it: the Honourable Gentleman did not comment on that hand-bill, and of courfe filence gave confent in that too. He thought the Houfe might be much better employed than in liftening to hand-bills, or any thing of the kind.

The Petition was read, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr.

Mr. Secretary Dundas prefented a Petition in favour of the Bills from the Magiftrates of Paifley, in Scotland.

General Macleod wifhed the Houfe to obferve, that all the Petitions from that Country were fent by the Corporations, not by the Inhabitants of the Towns.

Mr. Secretary Dundas prefented a Petition from the principal Inhabitants of the Town of Paifley, in favour of the Bill. That he conceived was a fufficient anfwer to the Honourable General's affertion. As to the Petition which had been before prefented againft the Bill from the Inhabitants of that place, he only thought it neceffary to read the letter of a Gentleman there (Mr. Foulton), with whofe refpectability of character almoft every Gentleman of that Houfe was acquainted; which ftated, that the moft unjuftifiable means were ufed to obtain fignatures, and that children under twelve years of age had figned it; while the property of thofe who figned the prefent Petition was fo great, that they paid taxes in the proportion of feven to one to thofe whofe names were to the former one.

General Macleod faid he was ready to bear teftimony to Mr. Foulton as a very refpectable manufacturer; he knew, however, that the fame perfon was connected with thofe who were connected with Minifters, and that if it were to ferve the views of thofe Minifters, thofe perfons, he believed, would furrender up the liberties of his country.

Mr. Dundas defended the refpectability of Mr. Foulton's character.

Mr. Hussey faid, he knew of no man of a more refpectable character.

General Macleod faid, in the very out-fet of his fpeech he had acknowledged the refpectability of Mr. Foulton's character, but he conceived, from the active part which he feemed to have taken in promoting the Petition againft the Bills, that he was authorifed to fay what he had faid.

Mr. Courtenay obferved, that Mr. Foulton might be a very refpectable character, but he did not fee that his Honourable Friend (General Macleod) had advanced any thing to derogate from it. The Members of that Houfe were very refpectable characters; and yet the majority had voted for two Bills that, in his opinion, went to fubvert the Conftitution. It had, he obferved, been ftated in the letter read by the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) that boys of ten or eleven years of age were invited to write their names to the Petition. He was glad to hear it: it was a proof of the advancement of learning in that quarter.

Mr. Foulton probably conceived that he could not give a better proof of the reſpectability of the Petitioners on his ſide of the queſtion, than by ſtating that they paid ſeven times more poor rates than the reſt. That was a new mode of calculating reſpectability in proportion to taxation; and if the rule ſhould be adopted, and the preſent war continued for ſome time, the people of this country muſt be the moſt reſpectable in the univerſe. The Petition was read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Mr. Secretary Dundas preſented Petitions from the Royal Burgh of Perth, and from the Merchants and Inhabitants of the Town and Port of Leith; alſo from the Mayor and Aldermen of Cheſterfield, in favour of the Bills: another to the ſame purport from the Magiſtrates and Town Council of Queensferry. The laſt of theſe Petitions gave riſe to a deſultory converſation, in conſequence of its being ſigned only by the Chief Magiſtrate, without having the common ſeal of the Corporation affixed. It was queſtioned whether ſuch a Petition could be received. By the anſwers it appeared, that ſometimes ſuch Petitions were ſigned in one way and ſometimes in another.

Mr. Erskine ſaid, this was like the anſwer of a young ſtudent at the Univerſity, who, when aſked whether the ſun revolved round the earth, or the earth round the ſun, replied, "ſometimes one way and ſometimes another." Mr. Erſkine, upon looking at the Petition, obſerved, that this Chief Magiſtrate of Queensferry ſigned himſelf "*Chiſe* Magiſtrate."

Mr. Courtenay upon this ſaid, he ſuſpected the ſignature to be a forgery, unleſs the Right Honourable Secretary would ſay, that *chiſe* was the Scotch orthography for chief.

Mr. Dent declared, he was not a little ſurpriſed at the arts which were employed to procure Petitions, and ſignatures to thoſe Petitions, againſt the Bills. As a proof of this, he ſaid, he had received a letter from the Mayor of Lancaſter, ſtating that he had read in the London Packet, that Mr. Sheridan had preſented a Petition to that Houſe againſt the Bills, ſigned by 1200 of the Freemen and other inhabitants of that town, of which meeting the Mayor ſaid he knew nothing. He himſelf, it was true, had preſented a Petition to that Houſe, againſt the Bills, ſigned by 88 of the Freemen of that Borough reſident in London, which number was by no means the majority of the burgeſſes.

Mr. Sheridan juſt entered as the Honourable Member ſat down. He ſaid he was much ſurpriſed when he was informed of what the Honourable Member had ſaid in his abſence. The Honourable Member well knew that he (Mr. Sheridan) had preſented no

no ſuch Petition, and that the miſtake in a Newſpaper gave birth to the letter, which had been juſt read from the Mayor of Lancaſter.

Mr. Dent ſaid, he had informed the Houſe, that what the Honourable Gentleman had juſt ſtated was preciſely the caſe.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, that if he was rightly informed, and he had no right to doubt the information, the Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dent) had prefaced his ſpeech with an obſervation on the many arts that had been uſed to ſeduce perſons to ſign Petitions againſt the Bills; and, in ſupport of this aſſertion, he had read a letter from the Mayor of Lancaſter, which was founded on a miſtake in a Newſpaper; a new kind of proof indeed! but if the Honourable Gentleman had obſerved that candour which one gentleman was entitled to expect from another, eſpecially in his abſence, he ſhould have added, that he had a converſation with Mr. Sheridan on the ſubject, and that he had acknowledged, in that converſation, that he well knew Mr. Sheridan had preſented no ſuch Petition, and that he (Mr. Dent) knew of no Petition preſented to that Houſe but the one he had himſelf preſented, ſigned by 88 of the Freemen of that Borough. When he had the honour of preſenting a Petition, ſigned by 4,000 of the inhabitants of Birmingham, Mr. Sheridan reminded the Houſe that he had ſtated, that the Proprietors of two public Prints in that town refuſed to publiſh the advertiſement in thoſe Newſpapers for calling the meeting. He had ſince been informed, on the beſt authority, that this was not preciſely the caſe, as the meeting was called in the interval of the publication of thoſe Prints. He mentioned this circumſtance, as he wiſhed to do juſtice to the character of every man; he could, neverthe leſs, add, in addition to the obſtruction which the Petition had experienced on that occaſion, that perſonal violence had been offered to the Petitioners. Thoſe perſons who had ſo offended were known, and perhaps he ſhould ſay more of that hereafter.

Mr. Sheridan preſented a Petition from ſeveral Villages in the vicinity of Dumbarton, in Scotland, and another from the Inhabitants of Wigton, againſt the Bills.

Mr. Erskine ſaid, he held in his hand a Petition from ſome of the moſt reſpectable Inhabitants of the City of Edinburgh; he had liſtened to what was ſtated by Gentlemen who were friendly to the Bills, with reſpect to the various arts and miſrepreſentations that had been employed in order to obtain ſignatures to Petitions againſt the Bills. Of this, at preſent, it was not his intention to ſay much, becauſe the diſpute would be endleſs; the time was however approaching, when the unequivocal voice of the public would be heard

heard in that Houſe. He could not preſent the Petition in his hand without ſaying a few words, in order to give the Houſe an idea of the obſtruction which the Petitioners had experienced. A Committee of the moſt reſpectable gentlemen in that city had been appointed to conduct the Petition. It was deemed proper by that Committee to publiſh hand-bills, to give notice of the place where the Petition ſhould be left for ſignatures. The man who was employed to poſt up thoſe bills was apprehended before he had even poſted up one of them, and detained as a priſoner. The Committee wrote to the Provoſt, ſtating the fact. The man, it was true, was diſcharged, but this was trivial in compariſon to what followed. He did not wiſh to ſpeak of another circumſtance, becauſe the perſon involved in it was too near to him in relationſhip, (his brother). The conduct of that Gentleman would, however, ſpeak for itſelf. The Petition was ſigned by 8,000 perſons and upwards.

Gen. Macleod begged leave to ſay, that from motives of delicacy he had no thought to call the attention of the Houſe to ſome circumſtances which the Learned Gentleman thought proper to allude to. A Learned Gentleman in the City of Edinburgh, acting up to thoſe principles he had ever profeſſed, (the Hon. Henry Erſkine) had, in taking a zealous part in promoting the Petition, experienced what his public and his private character ought to have ſecured him from. That Learned Gentleman had been, and was at preſent, his affectionate friend. His private life was the moſt amiable; his wit the happieſt and moſt inoffenſive; and his convivial talents ſuch as to engage the eſteem of all that had the happineſs of his acquaintance: in ſhort, his talents were ſo brilliant and ſo well acknowledged, that the only diſpute among the Literati of that country was, whether, if put in a balance with his brother, his talents or thoſe of his Learned Friend who had juſt ſat down would turn the ſcale. Yet this Gentleman, with all the acknowledged qualities he had juſt deſcribed, was treated in a manner little to be expected; and from whom did he receive this treatment? From one of the moſt learned and enlightened bodies in Scotland; a body that was always conſidered as ſuch—the Faculty of Advocates. That body had choſen his Honourable Friend their Dean, a ſituation merely honorary: he had filled that ſituation with increaſing luſtre for ten years:—yet they wiſhed to get rid of him, becauſe he came forward to promote a Petition, in the moſt legal way, againſt the enactment of a law, which he conſidered to be incompatible with the liberties of the country and the principles of the Conſtitution. He lamented that ſo learned and able a body ſhould have departed from their original reſolutions, as to ſuffer political opinions

to interfere in their proceedings, but to diſtinguiſh men by their talents and general eſteem. Their letter on that occaſion did them no great credit either as to ſtyle or liberality. He was glad, however, that they publiſhed it, as, if poſſible, it placed his Hon. Friend in a more exalted point of view than ever. One thing, which gave him no ſmall degree of uneaſineſs, was, that the Judges were choſen out of this body of Advocates. Notwithſtanding their ſentiments, he hoped that none would be found to tread in the ſteps of a certain Judge in that country, who ſaid, that a man found guilty of a miſdemeanour ought to ſuffer to the ſentence of—*Inter beſtias feras projiciatur* :—in other words, to be thrown among wild beaſts. Gentlemen talked of the arts which had been employed to gain ſignatures to Petitions in favour of the Bills, whilſt, at the ſame time, thoſe who charged them with theſe arts paſſed over the means uſed to gain proſelytes to petition on their own ſide, and to ſwell the liſt of ſignatures; it was a well known fact, that the Counter-Petition to his Honourable Friend's (Mr. Erſkine) was placed in every way to engage ſignatures; nay, ſchool-boys were invited to write their names to it, at the expence of a glaſs of wine, a cheering clap on the back, and a good boy into the bargain.

Mr. Secretary Dundas ſtated, that in 1792, incendiary hand-bills were circulated at a late hour, when the Police wiſely ordered the watch to apprehend every perſon detected in the circulation of bills after a certain time of day; and, under this order, the bill-ſticker was committed. With regard to the practices of encouraging ſchool-boys to ſign the Counter-Petition, the fact could be eaſily aſcertained, for there was not a name ſubſcribed without a deſignation. He mentioned a caſe, to ſhew that names had been unduly applied to this Petition. A young Surgeon in Edinburgh informed Dr. Monro, the Profeſſor of Anatomy, and a very worthy man, that he had ſeen his name affixed to the Circus Petition, whereupon Dr. Monro made an affidavit to the contrary. The motive for putting Dr. Monro's name to the Petition, Mr. Dundas aſcribed to the influence it would have upon many people, as he was one of the moſt popular Profeſſors in the Univerſity, and his lectures were generally attended by four or five hundred perſons from every part of Europe. He read the affidavit of Dr. Monro, [Mr. Fox remarked, that the affidavit did not ſay that the Doctor had himſelf ſeen his name ſubſcribed to the Petition in queſtion.] Mr. Dundas explained, by ſtating that there could not well be any miſtake, ſince the name of Alexander Monro, M. D. was the only name which had a deſignation. He appealed to the Houſe whether they had ever heard a diſreſpectful word from him, relative

tive to the Honourable Henry Erſkine? Differing as they did in political opinions, no man was more willing to acknowledge his powerful wit, his pleaſing talents, and his ſtrict integrity; by taking an active part at the meeting, where he exerted his eloquence, he might poſſibly not act conſiſtently with the opinions of the Faculty of Advocates; and if ſo, they ſurely were at liberty to decide as they pleaſed. Mr. Dundas, in early life, had been placed at the head of that Faculty, for which honour it was not only entitled to his general reſpect, but gratitude; and above all other qualities, he contended that the Faculty of Advocates was remarkable for independence. In anſwer to the remark, that the future Judges were to be choſen from the Faculty, and that their opinions were therefore to be feared, he affirmed that no Judge could give his opinion contrary to the law and the verdict, and when the Lord Juſtice Clerk uſed the words, "that a man guilty of ſedition ſhould be thrown among wild beaſts," he did not give it as his opinion that ſuch ſhould be the puniſhment for the crime in Scotland, but he quoted that as the ſentence of the Roman law. Mr. Dundas concluded, by aſking whether that way of talking of a grave and reverend character was polite or decent?

Mr. Erskine ſaid, it was a ſuppoſition that Dr. Monro's name was ſubſcribed to the Petition that he had, which, though it had not the weight of his name, had 7 or 800 names of great reſpectability. He was ſorry, however, that another celebrated Doctor of the ſame name was not at this time living in England, to cure the Miniſters of their madneſs, in paſſing theſe Bills into a law. The Petition was read, and ordered to lie on the table.

Mr. Erſkine then preſented Petitions from Dundee, and Eaſt Monkton, in the county of Lanark, againſt the Bills, and Mr. Dundas one from Edinburgh, and Mr. Wilberforce one from the county of York, in their ſupport.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the order of the day, for the third reading of the Bill for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government.

Mr. Harrison oppoſed the third reading on two grounds: firſt, whether the act of Edward III. was ſufficiently ſtrong to prevent the neceſſity of any new law for the ſafety of his Majeſty's perſon? Secondly, whether the laws exiſting were ſufficient to provide againſt and puniſh any language or publications that went to the ſubverſion of the Government? He argued that the preſent ſhould rather be a declaratory Act, ſtating that doubts had ariſen concerning the conſtruction of the High Treaſon Statute of Edward III. than a new permanent Act. In his own mind he declared he was fully

fully perſuaded that they were ſufficient. The preſent Bill was a ſatire on the Crown, and a libel on the loyalty of the people of England: becauſe it placed his Majeſty in an unfavourable point of view; in as much as it ſtated, that it was neceſſary to make additional laws to ſecure the life of an amiable Sovereign, which were not thought neceſſary to be made in the worſt of times, when Sovereigns of a very different character ſwayed the ſceptre of this country; and, in order if poſſible to place this in a ſtill more conſpicuous point of view, it was limited to the life of the Sovereign. The Sovereign of a free people ought, moſt undoubtedly, to live in the affections of his ſubjects, and Mr. Harriſon ſaid he was perſuaded that his Majeſty did ſo live. The law, therefore, was calculated to ſecure Miniſters in their places, and to ſmother that popular odium which they were well aware muſt attach to their characters, in conſequence of the ruinous and calamitous war in which they had wantonly involved this country. If Gentlemen would only reflect on the proſperous ſituation of this country at the commencement of hoſtilities, and compare it with the preſent, how muſt their feelings be affected! If we had continued in peace, wealth would have flowed in from every quarter; ſo that by this time, with even a ſmall ſhare of œconomy, the national debt would have been conſiderably reduced. The burdens of the people would alſo have been lightened in proportion, and inſtead of a repetition of grievances, we ſhould hear only the voice of congratulation and cheerfulneſs. Only let Gentlemen look at the reverſe of this conduct? The national debt was increaſed, the burdens of the ſubject were daily accumulating! Under all theſe circumſtances what was the conduct of his Majeſty's Miniſters? Inſtead of conciliating the affections of the ſubjects, they were adding place to place, penſion to penſion, grievance to grievance, and inſtead of redreſs, offering inſult. The Honourable Gentleman alſo reprobated the conduct of his Majeſty's Miniſters with reſpect to the time which they had choſen to bring down his Majeſty's moſt gracious communication to that Houſe, with reſpect to the pleaſing proſpect of peace. Had they brought it down before the terms of the loan were cloſed, it would have ſaved upwards of two millions to the public. Theſe were real grievances, and in order to ſmother them, thoſe obnoxious Bills were brought into the Houſe. Thoſe grievances might however be ſmothered, but it would be impoſſible to extinguiſh them: they would break out into a flame, perhaps, when leaſt expected.

He next examined how far the laws were ſufficient to reſtrain the licentiouſneſs of the preſs, and hoped that an Honourable Baronet

Baronet (Sir William Pulteney) would allow the danger of this Bill, ſince it tended to deprive the people of the liberty of the preſs, the abuſes of which had already been puniſhed by the exiſting laws with great ſeverity. As for trifling abuſes, no privilege, he remarked, could be expected to exiſt without them. He ſaid, he looked with horror to the conſequences of the paſſing of this Bill. A private letter dropt out of the pocket, the malice of a ſervant, the repetition of a converſation at table, with a thouſand other circumſtances, frivolous and innocent in their natures, might be magnified to dangerous portents. No man would be ſafe for a moment; if a Bacon or a Locke were living, they would incur the penalties, and be doomed to live in exile among a deſperate band of outcaſts. Let Gentlemen conſult the hiſtory and annals of the world, and they would ſee the impolicy of ſuch rigorous reſtrictions on freedom. In Governments which had recourſe to ſuch oppreſſive meaſures, the moſt violent convulſions had happened, attended with circumſtances too ſhocking to repeat, and by the addition of ſuch new conſtructions of treaſon, the ſame violences might be provoked. Mr. Harriſon concluded by voting againſt the third reading.

Alderman Newnham ſaid, that after all the diſcuſſion which had taken place on the former nights, he would merely detain the Houſe with a few words. Leſt he ſhould be condemned for want of firmneſs, he would not give a ſilent ſupport to the Bill. He declared he had always thought there was great danger from the exiſtence of ſedition and treaſon—he always thought that this ſedition and treaſon were increaſed and circulated in the ſpeeches and libels of the ſocieties. He ſupported Adminiſtration in the war; and he did ſo, becauſe, in his honour and conſcience, he believed the war neceſſary, and unavoidable. The beſt reaſon for ſupporting the Bill before the Houſe was, the late baſe outrage and ſacrilegious attempt on his Majeſty. Was not ſuch a meaſure neceſſary, when a King, the moſt diſtinguiſhed for amiable and mild virtues, was attacked?—a King, who, he would ſay with the Poet—

"——— Hath borne his faculties ſo meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like Angels trumpet tongu'd againſt
The deep damnation of his taking off."

All the publications of the ſocieties, he contended, went to do away the Monarchy and both Houſes of Parliament; if Annual Parliaments and Univerſal Suffrage took place, the deſtruction of the three branches of the Conſtitution would ſoon follow. They might as well ſay they would turn out all the Members of that Houſe. Such was his public opinion; and he had long entertained it

it in private. In his honour and conſcience he believed ſome ſtrong meaſure neceſſary to ſtem the torrent of licentiouſneſs and anarchy; and he was as free to ſay, as to think, that the preſent meaſure was not ſtronger than neceſſary. The laws reſpecting treaſon were neither clear nor defined; and the Bill went to define and explain them. Thus, protection would be given to the Sovereign; and this Gentlemen ought to give with hand and heart. The Learned Gentleman (Mr. Harriſon) was ſhocked at the diſtreſſes of the poor, as if occaſioned merely by the war. That ſome of thoſe diſtreſſes might be owing to the war was indiſputable; but that moſt of them were the effects of other unforeſeen and unavoidable cauſes, could not be denied. The Honourable Gentleman laid the whole blame of this on Government. The Government had done every thing poſſible for the melioration of things: beſides, never were ſuch great contributions to alleviate the diſtreſſes of the lower ranks. He condemned this mode of declaration, becauſe it irritated the lower claſſes of people, who, from their habits and neceſſary avocations of life, were not enlightened enough to examine into all the cauſes of their own complaints; and who were as likely to break out, upon the inſtigations of artful men, into acts of outrage againſt his Majeſty, as any other perſon. The Bill went to ſecure the laws, liberty, religion, and property of the country from violation, and he was determined to give it his warmeſt ſupport.

Sir William Pulteney roſe to ſay a few words in reply to what had fallen from Mr. Harriſon, reſpecting the ſupport he gave the other Bill. He ſaid, he then had maintained, that no evil could ariſe from the paſſing of the Bill, while the liberty of the preſs exiſted. He was free to ſay the ſame of the preſent. What did the Bill do? It merely puniſhed the ſame offences differently: that which was before puniſhable, in the ſecond inſtance was by the Bill rendered in a greater degree puniſhable. Was this changing crimes or puniſhments, otherwiſe than by attaching the latter more immediately and more effectually to innovators and reformers, who wiſhed to overturn the Conſtitution and Government? He thought the laws of the country would not be in the leaſt altered, but that the laws in force would be better defined, and hence better enforced. The Honourable Gentleman, Sir William obſerved, had lamented that perſons would be endangered by ſuch a law; that falſe witneſſes might put their lives and characters in peril. Was not that the caſe with the laws in being? People often ſuffered by falſe witneſſes. Such arguments applied equally in caſes of murder. Were

not

not these, like all other laws, to be left to the decision of Juries? There was nothing new introduced by the Bill that was not in force for three hundred years, except one material provision. The Bill merely defined the law of Edward III. and all that could be called new, was making a conspiracy to levy war treason. This regulation was necessary in the present day, to restrain the sedition afloat in the country. No one, he was sure, would argue that an attempt to destroy the Parliament would not have as great a tendency to overthrow the Constitution, as a conspiracy to take the life of the King.

General Tarleton opposed the third reading. He remarked, that when the laws had hitherto been found sufficient for the happiness, prosperity, and freedom of the people, it was their duty to enquire what were the grounds for the introduction of these Bills. The reasons, in his mind, which induced Ministers to bring in the present Bill, and the one which lately passed that House, were the acquittals at the Old Bailey and the present ruinous war. If the case of the persons charged at the Old Bailey had been such as to have come under the treason laws of Edward the Third, it would have saved a Learned and Ingenious Gentleman (the Attorney General) a nine hours speech. If the present laws had then been passed, it would not have cost him all that flow of eloquence, or length of time. He traced the conduct of the Minister in a variety of instances, observable in the progress and encouragement of the war. The present Bill, he said, would prevent the people from canvassing the conduct of the Minister with respect to the war, and other domestic circumstances of a distressing nature. The security of the Monarch, the General said, lay in the heart of his subjects; and no Monarch was ever deeper rooted in the affections of his people than the Prince who filled the Throne at present: a sufficient evidence of this appeared when his Majesty went to St. Paul's, shortly after his recovery. The country having flourished these three hundred years, it became a matter of inquiry why these new laws should be introduced. A worthy Alderman had said, that the scarcity of bread, and high price of provisions, were not owing to the war. To what else then could they be owing, when bread was double the price that it had been at when this disastrous war commenced? Soap had increased, candles had increased in price, and, in short, all the necessaries of life had increased enormously. One of the principal reasons of the attack on his Majesty was the war most undoubtedly. The Lord Chief Justice had said, that those men who had thus associated were not powerful in numbers, nor was their exchequer very rich, as it contained no more than

forty pounds at moſt; yet the war and theſe trials had afforded Miniſters pretexts for theſe importunate meaſures. We had, he contended, attacked France wantonly and unprovokedly, becauſe we did not chuſe that twenty-five millions of people ſhould ſettle their internal government without our interference. To the attacks alone of foreign powers on them were owing all the cruelties that had been practiced by Danton, Marat, and Robeſpierre. The General having expatiated on a variety of topics, and diſcuſſed them at conſiderable length, from the French Revolution to the preſent period, quoted from an author of ſome authority, "That the end of a pilot is a proſperous voyage; the end of a general is victory; the health of his patient is the end of a phyſician; and the end of a ſtateſman to promote the happineſs, proſperity, and freedom of his country."

Mr. Western declared he felt horror and indignation againſt the Bill, and was fully ſatisfied of the truth of the obſervation of a Noble Lord, that the extenſion of the Penal Laws afforded the leaſt protection to the Sovereign, Government, and Subject. The nearer a King approached to deſpotiſm, the more was his perſonal danger increaſed. He hoped, however, that in the preſent caſe it would be otherwiſe. The Bill, he was convinced, was ſubverſive of the fundamental principles of the Conſtitution, and therefore he ſhould not be ſorry to ſee the Sovereign give his negative to it. It had ever been his opinion, Mr. Weſtern ſaid, that the Sovereign's beſt ſecurity was in the affections of his ſubjects; he wondered how that ſecurity could laſt, when, in addition to their hard burdens and diſtreſſes, they were deprived of every privilege by falſe ſtatements, or miſtaken policy. The Bill would put an end to mutual confidence and general freedom, while it would render the crime of high treaſon vague and indefinite, and the perſon of his Majeſty unſafe. As a ſtronger argument in ſupport of this obſervation than any of his own, he would read an extract from a writer of great weight and authority, he meant Dean Swift, who, in his political creed, forcibly argues againſt the ſuſpenſion of any of the liberties of the people, points out the conſequences to which ſuch ſuſpenſion muſt lead, and the encouragement which it gives to ſpies and informers, "the moſt accurſed race that God ever ſuffered to exiſt." This applied to the politics of the preſent day. No laws, he ſaid, ought to be introduced on which depended the life of the moſt inſignificant ſubject. It was remarked by both Monteſquieu and Blackſtone, that any laws that went to reſtrain the liberty of the ſubject were dangerous. Under all theſe conſiderations, he would vote againſt the third reading of the Bill, which tended to break down

down every barrier of the Conſtitution that had been erected ſince the reign of Edward III.

Mr. Hawkins Browne differed from the Honourable Gentleman as to the conſtruction of treaſon. He thought the Bill would have a contrary effect from that which the Honourable Gentleman had ſtated; it would define clearly what was treaſon, and give a legiſlative ſanction to the ſuppreſſion of it. No King, he was perſuaded, ever had the affections of his people in a greater degree than his Majeſty; and he was equally certain, that ſo far from gaining affection by giving his negative to the Bills, it would contribute to his unpopularity. The Honourable Gentleman had quoted Swift as a perſon whoſe political principles ſanctioned the opinion he ſupported. He certainly was a very great man and a maſterly writer, but he was a diſappointed man, and a moſt factious, ſplenetic, and ſeditious perſon. Mr. Browne ſaid, he thought the Bill calculated to calm the agitation of the public mind, by giving the Magiſtrate a power to apprehend people for acting againſt the laws of the country. The mere enactment of the Bills would, he conceived, have ſuch an effect, that there would be little occaſion for the interference of the Magiſtrate.

Mr. Maurice Robinson hoped the negative of the Sovereign might be gained, and blamed the Honourable Gentleman for endeavouring to degrade the character of the author of the Drapier's Letters. He acknowledged that the Honourable Gentleman was a worthy man, but obſerved that there was a great deal of private worth in the country, and very little public ſpirit; he ſuſpected the Honourable Gentleman would go as far as any man in ſupport of the meaſures of Adminiſtration; and that, as times went, was ſaying a great deal. Such was his opinion of the two Bills before Parliament, that, if the guillotine had been erected in this country, it could not be more terrific; and if the Miniſter imagined that it would produce the effect he deſired, and ſuppreſs the voice of the people, he muſt ſay that he knew very little of the temper of the people, or the Conſtitution of the country.

Mr. Bouverie declared he had been friendly to the Bill, becauſe he thought it at this time neceſſary; but he could not ſubſcribe to the opinion of his Honourable Friend, that it was not an extenſion of the laws of treaſon; it certainly was, and had been for that very reaſon intruded, though he was very glad to ſay, but for a ſhort time.

Mr. Sheridan ſaid, after what had fallen from the Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hawkins Browne) with reſpect to the author, from whoſe writings the paſſage, read by another Honourable Gentleman,

Gentleman, Mr. Weſtern, was taken, he could not remain ſilent. For that author he acknowledged, he entertained an hereditary reſpect as there never was a man who poſſeſſed a truer ſpirit of liberty, than he did: a fact of which his whole life and conduct afforded an inconteſtible proof. Upon looking at the paſſage, ſince read by the Honourable Gentleman, Mr. Weſtern, it ſtruck him that there never was one better adapted to the preſent times. Dean Swift had been no flatterer of the time in which he lived. Never was there a man who, in his writing and conduct, more ſhewed himſelf the friend and advocate of the rights of man and mankind. He was ſatirical and ſevere, but his ſeverity was aimed at real abuſes; he ſhewed his abhorrence of the very ſyſtem which obtained at the preſent day; he meant, governing by a ſyſtematic principle of corruption; he detailed abuſes, ſuch as thoſe of prodigal loans for the convenience, not to give it a harſher term, of Gentlemen in the Houſe of Commons, which tended to make a Parliament governed by Miniſterial influence. He recollected, though perhaps imperfectly, ſome lines either of a poem called the Legion Club (or in a libel on the Rev. Dr. Delaney, and his Excellency Lord John Carteret) where Dean Swift ſuppoſes in Ireland, for no ſuch thing could happen here, that a Miniſter comes with a budget full of rewards for thoſe who ſupport him, which though of courſe not applicable now, might ſhew what the corruption of loans and budgets were in Dean Swift's time.

He ſays, after ſuppoſing that a Gentleman who pays his court to a Miniſter, muſt perform actions contrary to his diſpoſition, like the avenging angel in Mr. Addiſon's admired ſimile.

"So to deſtroy a guilty land,
"An Angel ſent by heaven's command;
"While he obeys Almighty will,
"Perhaps may feel compaſſion ſtill,
"And wiſh the taſk had been aſſign'd
"To ſpirits of leſs gentle kind."
But I, in politics grown old,
Whoſe thoughts are of a different mold,
Who from my ſoul ſincerely hate,
Both K— and Miniſters of State;
Who look on courts with ſtricter eyes
To ſee the ſeeds of vice ariſe,
Can lend you an alluſion fitter,
Though *flatt'ring knaves* may call it *bitter*;
Which, if you durſt but give it place,
Would ſhew you many a Stateſman's face.

* * * * * * *

So

So to effect his *Monarch's* ends,
From *hell* a *viceroy* devil afcends;
His *budget* with *corruptions* cram'd,
The contributions of the *damn'd*;
Which with unfparing hand he ftrows
Through *courts* and *fenates* as he goes;
And then at Belzebub's *Black-Ball*,
Complains his budget was too fmall."

Mr. Sheridan fufpected that there had been a fimilar ftrewing of favours here, and that the Honourable Gentleman oppofite had come in for his fhare, though he certainly would not prefume to fay

From budgets with corruptions cram'd,
The contributions of the damn'd.

With regard to the fubject immediately before the Houfe, he faid he did not mean to enter into it, becaufe it did not need comment; there were ftatutes enough in exiftence againft the crimes the Bill went to punifh. The firft claufe met his difapprobation, as tending to exprefs a new treafon in the attempt of perfons overawing Parliament. The fecond claufe, which went to prevent the printing and publifhing, &c. of feditious matters, he was equally repugnant to. According to that claufe, if any perfon fhould be guilty of a mifdemeanor a fecond time, he was to be tranfported; fo that by the claufe, as it ftood, the punifhment for the fecond offence was more fevere than before. With refpect, however, to the operations of this Act, he would affert, that had it exifted ten years back, and indeed for that reafon he was forry it did not, fome of his Majefty's prefent Minifters would have been fent to Botany-Bay, as they themfelves, within that period, had excited the people to thofe movements which the Bill profeffedly endeavoured to prevent. Could the Right Honourable Gentleman himfelf forget the meetings of the Thatched Houfe Tavern, at which he had been prefent, and agitated the queftion of Parliamentary Reform in conjunction with the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Horne Tooke, and other well known characters, and the agitation of the people in confequence of fuch meetings? If he did not, he muft fee, that they had a tendency to promote crimes which he now wifhed to punifh. According to the prefent Bill, fhould any perfon even attempt to ftate the neceffity of a Parliamentary Reform, it would come under the denomination of a crime, as having a tendency to overawe and influence the Parliament; and for this crime, fo conftituted, the rigorous punifhment of feven years tranfportation was enacted, fhould it be a fecond time committed.

He would aſk the Learned Gentleman (the Attorney General) whether Mr. Reeves would not have been guilty of a firſt offence, by the publication of the pamphlet that had lately met with the animadverſion of the Houſe, according to the operation of this Act? He was certain he would acknowledge that he would, and then he would ſhew him many others of which that gentleman was the author; ſo that had the Act had exiſtence but a ſhort time before, Mr. Reeves would have merited tranſportation; certainly no production ever tended more than his to ſtir up hatred and contempt againſt the Conſtitution of Great Britain than Mr. Reeves's pamphlet. The clauſe was artfully calculated to prevent the reform of any of the abuſes of Government. The outrage committed on the perſon of his Majeſty, which met with equal diſapprobation from all, was, in reality, nothing but a pretext for the introduction of the Bills, which, if acted upon, he was apprehenſive would tend rather to convulſe than to pacify the country. It was, therefore, his opinion, that the King would do right to give thoſe Bills his negative when he came down to the Houſe. The exceſs of homage and admiration that muſt ariſe in the breaſt of a grateful people from ſuch a magnanimous act, would render his Majeſty's crown doubly ſecure. Then he might ſay, "Diſmiſs my guards, the affections of my ſubjects are my beſt defence."

Mr. Sheridan had propoſed an amendment in the ſecond clauſe, which he ſuppoſed the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Dundas) oppoſite to him, as he ſo ſtrongly vindicated the loyalty of his Conſtituents, would not have any objection to. The amendment went to take away the diſcretionary power of the Judge in Scotland, in reſpect to the puniſhment for ſedition, and to confine the puniſhment to ſeven years, in like manner as the Bill provided for this kingdom.

Mr. Jenkinson roſe to expreſs his approbation of the Bills that had given riſe to ſuch warmth of debate, and ſo much aſperity of animadverſion. In whatever light other Gentlemen might view them, he could not but regard them as wiſe, prudent, and ſalutary meaſures, and ſuch as were loudly and urgently called for by the neceſſity of the times. That inflammatory and ſeditious doctrines were daily preached up, and induſtriouſly diſſeminated, every one muſt be convinced, who truſted to the teſtimony of his ears or eyes; and between the propagators of theſe doctrines and the nefarious outrage offered to the ſacred perſon of his Majeſty, it was hard to ſay that no connection exiſted; in his judgment, all the circumſtances which accompanied that foul attempt went evidently to prove that it was previouſly planned and pre-concerted.

The

The evidence adduced before the Houſe of Lords relative to the outrage on the firſt day of the Seſſion, ſhewed that the crowd which purſued his Majeſty's coach to the Houſe of Lords were obſerved to act in concert, and the very ſame perſons were alſo obſerved to follow his Majeſty from the Houſe, and repeatedly to cry out—"Down with George! No King!" while they threw not one, but ſeveral ſtones at the carriage. The ſource of this outrageous and criminal behaviour he would not pretend to trace back immediately to Copenhagen-Houſe, or to Clubs and Debating Societies; but he thought himſelf warranted to ſay, that the inflammatory language held at theſe meetings was at leaſt the remote cauſe of the inſult every good ſubject muſt lament and execrate; and of which no example had been witneſſed in this country ſince the Revolution, except by the hands of a lunatic.

That the meaſures under diſcuſſion were auſtere in their aſpect, and threatened to be rigorous in their operations, he would not deny; but when crimes peculiar to the times aroſe, both wiſdom and policy ſuggeſted the neceſſity of enacting ſome ſeverer laws than were uſually and in ordinary times to be reſorted to. Sedition was unqueſtionably the reigning crime of theſe days, as was evident from the Lords Report; to check ſedition and the doctrines that provoked it, ſome additional puniſhment ſhould be held out *in terrorem.* The Bill was not, however, of that very rigorous and relentleſs ſeverity which it was miſrepreſented to be: it enacted no puniſhment on the firſt offence, nor was the offender liable to its proviſions, unleſs he be convicted by a Jury of the ſecond offence. Whoever, therefore, is twice convicted of the ſame crime may juſtly be deemed and pronounced a hardened offender in the ſin of ſedition, and would deſervedly be delivered over to the fate which his incorrigible obſtinacy called for and juſtified.

Mr. Jenkinſon ſaw no reaſon why the proviſions of the Bill ſhould be extended to Scotland, as required by an Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan). To diſcuſs the nature of the penal code that exiſted in that country, was not at preſent the ſubject before the Houſe; it muſt occur to every Gentleman, however, that the Bill could not be introduced into Scotland, without altering the whole principle of the Scotch law. With regard to the difference in the magnitude of danger that exiſted in 1792 and at preſent, he agreed with his Right Honourable Friend (Mr. Dundas); it was not to be forgotten, however, that there had exiſted a ſubſequent period ſtill more dangerous; he meant that which ſucceeded the trials for high treaſon. A queſtion thence aroſe, why had not theſe ſevere meaſures been propoſed when the danger ſeemed

ſeemed ſo imminent? Becauſe the danger was abrupt and ſudden, and was not, as at preſent, regularly and ſyſtematically kept up and increaſed. More lenient meaſures were then tried, but to no purpoſe: the evil ſtill exiſted, was daily increaſing, and conſequently muſt be checked and extinguiſhed by ſeverer and more effectual remedies. Mr. Jenkinſon, in the courſe of his ſpeech, more than once alluded to the evidence before the Houſe of Lords, touching the outrage committed on his Majeſty on the 8th of October laſt.

MR. JEKYLL ſaid, that the Right Honourable Gentleman's endeavour to extract from the evidence of the Houſe of Lords an inference in ſupport of the preſent violent and almoſt unprecedented meaſure, had forced him to offer ſome animadverſion to the patience of the Houſe, though they had already been ſo ably, copiouſly, and eloquently diſcuſſed, that the chief effort incumbent upon him at that moment was an avoidance of tautology. The Right Honourable Gentleman ought to have been replied to by his Honourable Friend near him, his Majeſty's Attorney-General, who ſhould not have remained ſilent as a conſtitutional lawyer, when he heard ſuch deductions attempted from ſuch ſources of teſtimony, which, except the individual miſcreant, who raiſed his ſacrilegious hand againſt the perſon of the Monarch, implicated no one elſe, and far leſs any body of men, in any indictable offence. As to that offence, no man doubted, and ſtill leſs the Honourable and Learned Serjeant (Mr. Adair), who, he lamented, had left the Houſe, that it was high treaſon, and for the puniſhment of which no ſuch Bill as the preſent was neceſſary.

To ſhew the ſeverity of the laws already in force, he would only advert to a late trial, (that of the Rev. Mr. Winterbotham) at which he had been preſent. There the defendant was charged with ſedition, and it was even a queſtion of doubt with the Jury whether they ſhould find him guilty. He aſked if the cumulative ſentence of Mr. Winterbotham for the two offences, (a four years bitter impriſonment,) was not adequate, without ſuperadding the honor of tranſportation, almoſt too the only ſolitary inſtance of repetition of offences of that ſpecies,—the only one he believed; yet now a general law was thought neceſſary on the ſubject. His ſentence was, for the two ſeparate offences, four years impriſonment in Newgate. He reprobated the increaſing of the ſanguinary catalogue of laws, which the Judges had exerciſed in his caſe, in inflicting two years impriſonment, would now be done away, as the Judges would be obliged to decide in the terms of the act. He begged leave to appeal to the experience of the Roman times, and the page of their hiſtory, in proof of the conſequence and effect of

of ſeveral laws; he reminded the Houſe of the ſanguinary laws of the Roman Kings, and aſked how long the Regal form of Government ſubſiſted? During the period of the Republic the Porcian law repealed the penalty of death, and the Republic flouriſhed. Under the Emperors the bloody enactments revived, and the empire crumbled into duſt. In reply to what had fallen from an Honourable Baronet, (Sir W. Pulteney) he would ſay, that even on the Honourable Member's admiſſion, this Bill went to multiply, without ſtint and number, that villainous horde of ſpies, informers, and perjured witneſſes, who had already ſo often endangered the life, property, and reputation of innocent individuals, who, under a Bill like the preſent, might have ſent Rouſſeau, during a temporary reſidence in this country, and after a ſecond edition of his Social Contract, to all the miſeries of exile in the moſt inhoſpitable quarter of the globe; who might have driven Mr. Hume, for the Idea of a perfect Commonwealth, to languiſh with Muir and Palmer on the deſert ſhores of South America, amidſt felons and outcaſts of the meaneſt claſs of infamy.

Thus the Bill was levelled at the palladium of all freedom in a free country, and the liberty of opinion and the liberty of the preſs.

An Honourable Friend of his (Mr. Harriſon) had put a queſtion, which he would repeat, to every Honourable and Learned Member of his own profeſſion in that Houſe, "Was there any Lawyer there that would get up in his place, and aver, that for the various crimes of treaſon, conſpiracy, and ſedition, even if the two latter could be charged, as the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Jenkinſon) had contended from the Lords Report, that there were not ſtatutes on the Table to puniſh them?" Why then this harſh and cruel Bill?

According as he did with the opinion of his Honourable Friend, (Mr. Sheridan) he was confident it would increaſe the affections of his Majeſty's ſubjects towards him if he ſhould come down to the Houſe and give his *veto* to the Bills. His Miniſters had for a ſeries of years practiſed deluſions on the people, and now they attempted to delude the Parliament, and the Sovereign himſelf, by making him believe there were men in the country who wiſhed to dethrone him, and ſubvert the Conſtitution. Feeling it therefore his duty to make this laſt effort againſt a Bill which appeared to him to be ſo abominable, ſcandalous and infernal, and intended by Miniſters as a bulwark to ſhelter them from the juſt indignation of the people, he deprecated its ever paſſing into a law.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL ſaid he had heard of language reſembling that of the laſt Hon. ſpeaker having been uſed out of doors, but he did not expect to have heard any thing ſo intemperate in

in that House. One of the Bills to which the Honourable Gentleman had applied such extraordinary epithets had already received the sanction of Parliament, and the other was that day brought forward to be read a third time. These Bills, thus sanctioned, the Honourable Gentleman had thought proper to call abominable, scandalous and infernal. With respect to the Bill then before the House, which had been thus characterised, if Gentlemen would examine it fairly and impartially, they would find it to be nothing more than a legislative exposition of the statute of Edward III. Nor could any lawyer say that these Acts went farther than that statute; for by them the statute of Edward III. was only made more explicit and defined; and this Parliamentary declaration, to shew what the law is, was wise and necessary, as the subjects of the kingdom ought to know, and perfectly understand, that the law of treason, and all the sound and wholesome laws of the country were impartially dealt out to them, especially those on which their lives depend. With regard to the first clause of the Bill, no doubt arose upon that; in respect to the provision which applied to the overawing of Parliament, it was fit to tell the subject whether Bills were to be formed on certain circumstances amounting to offence; and it was also necessary that Judges and Juries should know the same. It was the duty of Parliament to make so interesting a subject evident to every capacity. In fact there was nothing new in the Bill, except the clause which he had just alluded to, the clause respected the overawing of Parliament. That part was a measure of legislative prudence which fell now to be considered, and the House would determine whether it ought to be adopted for three years, or rejected. Were Gentlemen not convinced of its necessity? That question he decided for himself; he did not pretend to decide it for any other. He owned he was not a little surprised to see Gentlemen affect to know nothing of the societies that had caused such just alarms, or of the pernicious doctrines they had propagated and taught; especially after such convincing evidence had so repeatedly been given that such was the tendency of their principles and proceedings. Could their innocence be proved, and that the present measures were not necessary, he would be one of the first to resist those very measures which he at present felt it his duty earnestly to recommend and steadily to support.

He took a view of the different political societies, and of the source from whence they sprung. France and French principles he looked upon as their fruitful parent. Hence the mother societies; hence the affiliated ones that spread themselves over the whole surface of the country. The engines they employed to diffuse their principles,

principles, were libels, seditious meetings, and industriously disseminating an idea that their numbers were immense; at one time they boasted that they amounted to three hundred thousand; at another they had stated themselves as forming the majority of the nation.

Their progress had since been somewhat checked by the late trials for high treason, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act; but scarcely were these restraints and intimidations removed, but they had reared anew their heads with renovated hardihood. If he did not know these things, he could not defend the Bills. It was necessary at this time to give up a part of the valuable privileges of the Constitution, that we might not lose their enjoyment for ever. It had been urged that this Bill was all a pretence to introduce a new law respecting misdemeanor, for the purpose of preventing all meetings for the discussion of the important subject of Parliamentary Reform. Did Gentlemen mean to say, that which was formerly legal with respect to that object would now be illegal? He was confident no such assertion could be maintained. He had heard over and over again of the cruelty of the prosecutions, and the severity of the punishments for sedition. He could with confidence delare that there had never been a case of the kind, in which he had been called upon to prosecute, that he did not state to the Jury that he would rather have the gown stripped from his back than ask them to give a verdict contrary to their consciences. In the case of misdemeanor, there was no alteration of the law, until the second offence, and even then the mercy of the Sovereign could be interposed, if it should be found that the case either merited or required it. This was a proper and constitutional qualification to the laws, and no rational and reflecting man would deny, that what ought to be an object of general prevention, ought certainly to have a specific punishment legally attached to it.

Mr. Fox entirely agreed with his Honourable and Learned Friend (Mr. Jekyll) in thinking that there were no terms of reprobation and contempt too severe for the two important Bills which Ministers had brought on the sudden into Parliament. After hearing several speeches of the Learned Gentleman, (the Attorney-General) with all the attention of which he was capable, and after examining minutely the amendments which the Bill had undergone in the Committee, he confessed that at that moment he was as much as ever disposed to object to every tittle and clause of it. He still retained the same objections against the clauses relative both to sedition and misdemeanor that he had ever entertained. He was prejudiced against the Bill from its very preamble. An outrage

had been committed upon the perſon of the Sovereign, and a new enactment was made, not for the better ſecurity of the life of the King, for that was impoſſible, but to conſtitute an attempt to over-awe the Houſes of Parliament into a ſubſtantive treaſon. He was told that the preſent Bill was merely declaratory; and he was told, at the ſame time, that it was merely temporary; a temporary declaratory Bill he had no heſitation to pronounce an abſurdity, and a contradiction in terms.

That the Bill went to create new treaſons had been confidently denied; he muſt however affirm the direct contrary, and aſſert that it did create new treaſons, if it was admitted that there was any difference between an act being high treaſon, and an act being only evidence of high treaſon. At preſent an overt act was an evidence of high treaſon; but by the proviſions of this Bill, thoſe acts which were before only evidence of treaſon, became in themſelves ſubſtantive treaſons. And if new ſubſtantive treaſons were created, new conſtructions would be made upon theſe treaſons; ſo that not only all the conſtructions of the preſent ſtatute would be conſtituted into ſubſtantive treaſons, but new conſtructions would ariſe upon theſe new created treaſons, which would perplex the ſtatute to a degree that would render it impoſſible to be fairly underſtood. He had no objection to a declaratory Bill, explanatory of the ſtatute of Edward the Third, by which it might be reduced to its plain, ſimple, and original meaning. The preſent Bill, however, he did not conſider to be by any means calculated for that purpoſe. It was, indeed, the faſhion to ſay, that it was neceſſary to give ſome additional ſecurity to the perſon of the Sovereign. He would nevertheleſs contend and maintain that it was not the natural effect of the extenſion of penal laws to confer ſecurity; and he appealed to the hiſtory of the world for the truth of his opinion.—Was there ever an inſtance in any country in which the Sovereign, whether he was individual, or whether that power was deputed to an aſſembly, was indebted for ſecurity to the ſeverity of a penal code. He called upon the Houſe to look into the hiſtory of the bad times of the world and to compare his obſervation with facts; and, if they were not ſatisfied with that compariſon, he deſired that they would judge of it upon the experience of more modern times. If they looked at the fall of the late unfortunate King of France, they would find that his fate was not owing to the laws againſt treaſon being too mild and moderate: the laws of France upon that ſubject were ſanguinary enough to ſuit the palate of any Gentleman in that Houſe. When Robeſpierre fell, the laws againſt

treaſon,

treafon were certainly fanguinary enough. When the King of Sweden fell, the laws there againft treafon were fanguinary enough. So, in the times of Charles the Firft and Second; and fo in all the hiftory of our country, in which plots real or imaginary had ever been talked of. What leffon therefore did thofe hiftorical records hold out? That the feverity of the laws of treafon rather tended to create than deftroy and put an end to plots againft Government and the perfon of the Supreme Governor. All thofe outrages had not arifen from an imperfection in the treafon laws, but from a fanaticifm or enthufiafm of the people, when feeing and feeling their liberties invaded. The prefent Bill might occafion the evils it aimed to prevent, for which object in his opinion the provifions were not adapted. From what time were the regulations of the prefent Bill borrowed? Were they not copied from the reign of Charles the Second, a Prince againft whom, certainly, not the feweft perfonal attacks had been directed. As far then as the Bill refpected the law of treafon, in his opinion, it created new fubftantive treafons, by conftituting an attempt to overawe the Parliament, an overt act of treafon. He would not fuppofe that the framers of the Bill intended that an attempt to overawe the Parliament, by the violence of prayer and of petition, fhould be confidered as an overt act of treafon. If however they meant to affix the penalty to hoftilities directed againft Parliament, the provifion he confidered as fuperfluous, as it would be impoffible to wage hoftilities againft either Houfe of Parliament, without, in the firft place, making an attack upon the perfon of the Sovereign. It had been ftated, that a convention had met for the exprefs purpofe of overawing the Legiflature; but of this he had never heard any thing that could be confidered as proof, affertions he had heard in abundance. He had fome material objections to another claufe refpecting treafon, which had been fomewhat altered in the Committee, but which in fome refpects had not been altered for the better. The claufe to which he referred was that in which the words "writing or overt act or deed" occurred. The word *other* was put out, but he could not underftand what was meant by the words that were fuffered to remain. If there was either fenfe or grammar in the expreffion, fomething elfe than an overt act was meant. And if writing was contra-diftinguifhed from an overt act to be confidered as a fubftantive treafon, he demanded with what propriety, or upon what grounds, it was declared, that the prefent Bill was merely explanatory of the ftatute of Edward the Third?

 Having

Having ſaid thus much upon the treaſon part of the Bill, which he thought the objectionable, he proceeded to remark upon the clauſe reſpecting miſdemeanor. And here alſo it was contended, that the Bill did not go to create any new miſdemeanor, which he poſitively denied, becauſe under the Bill the Judge would have it in his power to ſay to the Jury, "Do you find that theſe words and ſentences were ſpoken with a deſign to excite the hatred and contempt of the people againſt the Houſe of Commons as at preſent conſtituted ?" and if the Jury ſhould find ſuch a deſign to be proved, the Court would have nothing to do but to claim the right of explaining the law, and, under the legal conſtruction of the act, to enforce its penalties. Upon this principle a meeting could not be held with a view to petition for a Reform in Parliament, without incurring the penalties denounced in the proviſions of the Act. With regard to the penalty of tranſportation for the ſecond offence, he did not think that the arguments which he had urged, on a former night, had ever been anſwered. He had aſſerted, what he was not diſpoſed then to retract ; that the ſame offence ought never to be puniſhed with different penalties, particularly when there were different ſhades and degrees in the offence. The Learned Gentleman had pleaded the power of his Majeſty to pardon, as an extenuation of the ſeverities of the Act. This privilege Mr. Fox conſidered as abſolutely neceſſary in a Government ſimilar to that of England ; but there was a wide difference between this privilege when applied to general and political crimes. It was notorious, that this privilege of the King was controlled in its exerciſe by his Miniſters. In caſes of felony he would truſt the compaſſion of almoſt every Miniſter, but in State proſecutions he would be backward in truſting any Miniſter, becauſe theſe were circumſtances in which Miniſters were particularly intereſted. It was ſaid that ſedition was the reigning crime of the day : if it was, it looked ill for Adminiſtration ; becauſe popular diſcontent was the uſual and indeed the natural conſequence of Miniſterial miſconduct, and he ventured to predict, that if the preſent ſyſtem was obſtinately purſued, ſtill more alarming conſequences would enſue. Such laws as the preſent Bills would conſtitute propoſed againſt ſedition, were to him objects of abhorrence, becauſe they were novelties unknown to the Engliſh Conſtitution. He was more and more convinced of the rectitude of his opinion, when he reflected on the deteſtable ſyſtem of criminal law practiſed in Scotland ; the iniquitous and cruel ſentence of the Court of Juſticiary in that part of the kingdom, his Majeſty's Miniſters had not only ſanctioned but elaborately defended. The trial of Mr. Muir, and the other unfortunate Gentlemen

who

who ſuffered a ſimilar fate, Mr. Fox could never think of without expreſſing his utmoſt abhorrence. The ſentence was an eternal diſgrace to the Court; and the Scotch Judge who had affirmed, that no puniſhment was too ſevere for the man who was guilty of ſedition, that the wretch ought to be expoſed to wild beaſts: that Judge, Mr. Fox ſaid, merited the univerſal execration of mankind, and it would entail laſting diſgrace on the preſent times, as nothing more harſh, brutal, and unfeeling, was to be found in the arbitrary and oppreſſive reigns of Charles the Second and Queen Mary.

In the Bill before the Houſe, the abominable and intolerant ſpirit of the Scotch Court was attempted to be eſtabliſhed. The proceedings were a national diſgrace, and were not exceeded in the barbarous code of the moſt barbarous ages. Had Mr. Muir's caſe been ſubmitted to an Engliſh Jury, he would, undoubtedly, have been acquitted: but, whether totally acquitted or not, he was fully perſuaded that he never would have been conſigned to the ſufferings which he had experienced. The noble and generous ſpirit of England would have revolted at ſuch exceſſive and overſtrained puniſhments. And, it ought never to be forgotten, that, notwithſtanding the Grand Jury found the bills againſt the perſons tried at the Old Bailey, the Petty Jury acquitted them. He condemned the unlimited power which the Bill was about to repoſe in the Executive Government.

By the infamy of ſpies and intrigues, both he and his countrymen were expoſed to the indignation of the Court party for the time being. He deprecated ſuch an unconſtitutional power, and beſtowed unbounded praiſe on our anceſtors for their wiſdom in reſiſting any appearance of ſuch abominable encroachments upon the liberties of the people. If the deteſtable ſpirit of the Scotch law reſpecting ſedition were eſtabliſhed in this country, then farewel to all liberty of ſpeech; then farewel to the familiarities of converſation. The ſervant who ſtood behind his chair, if wicked enough, might betray him; and, ſeduced by thoſe in power, might give information which would endanger both his life and liberty. The maid-ſervant of Mr. Muir had acted in a ſimilar manner: violating the confidence repoſed in every ſervant by a maſter, ſhe communicated to the friends of Government the honeſt, undiſguiſed expreſſions of Mr. Muir's mind. All that he had frequently expreſſed was, a wiſh for reform of the abuſes which he daily ſaw; and no good man could lay his hand upon his heart, and deny the rectitude of his mind, when provoked by ſuch a ſyſtem as ſullied the country which gave it birth.

Mr.

Mr. Fox faid, that if Mr. Reeves fhould be found guilty of the libel on that Houfe, which had lately engaged their notice; if he fhould be found to have recommended and circulated another infamous libel againft the Conftitution, written by Arthur Young; and if he fhould alfo be found to have publifhed at different times libels againft the Proteftant Diffenters, marking them out as a defcription of people who ought to be exterminated, he would even go upon his knees to befeech his Majefty, not to enforce againft Mr. Reeves a fentence of tranfportation. A good deal had been faid refpecting his Majefty's refufing his affent to thofe Bills. His own wifh was for that prerogative of the Crown to remain dormant and quiefcent. It was a prerogative which, he believed, would only be a favourite, while it was not attempted to be exercifed. He trufted, that if the Bills fhould pafs, they would meet with a fpeedy repeal. He rather trufted that the people would petition his Majefty to diffolve Parliament, which was their undoubted right, if ever Parliament had acted in fuch a way as to require an interference of that kind. He rejoiced that on the prefent occafion, the fpirit of the people had fhewn itfelf to be alive; and he trufted, that the difplay which had been made of the energy of the public mind, would be attended with the happieft effects. The Bills formed a crifis in the hiftory of the country; inafmuch as they were a departure from the whole fyftem of the principles of the Conftitution. The prefent Bill was modelled upon an Act of Charles II. The people of England had, in his opinion, committed a worfe offence, by the unconftitutional reftoration of that Monarch, than even by the death of Charles I. It was a meafure which originated in a period, when the Parliament gave up to the King the difpofal of the military force, and furrendered the liberties of the people at the foot of the Throne. There was one claufe in the Act of Charles II. which fhewed the fpirit of thofe times. By this claufe it was made penal to fay the King was a Papift. And why? Becaufe fuch was the precife fact. It was rather inaufpicious in the prefent moment, that it fhould be thought neceffary that a Bill fhould be adopted to prevent people from telling the truth. No man would however fay that George III. was a Papift. What however was the object of the prefent Bill? By this Bill men were forbidden to fpeak of the defects of Government, and of thofe abufes which were growing up from day to day, to deftroy the fpirit of the Conftitution. If Minifters had not been confcious of the exiftence of thofe defects, they would not have forbidden men to difcufs them. He had fomewhere read, that after the defeat of Brutus and Caffius, a decree had been paffed that Auguftus, who

was

was then raiſed to the higheſt dignities of the State, ſhould not be called a boy, *puer ne majeſtrati populi Romani detractaret.* Auguſtus paſſed no ſuch decree at the latter end of his reign; nor did Tiberius, at any period, feel ſuch a decree to be neceſſary. The preſent Bill was a law againſt proclaiming the defects of the Conſtitution, at a period when the Government was every day bringing on freſh abuſes. The Bill was itſelf an intolerable grievance. "This is the laſt opportunity," ſaid Mr. Fox, "that I may have to ſtate my ſentiments with reſpect to theſe Bills. I feel it therefore incumbent upon me to declare, that my objections ſtill remain unimpaired. The one is calculated to prevent the liberty of ſpeech; the other the liberty of writing and publiſhing. If theſe Bills be carried into effect, and if their influence extend to the national character, other nations will be enabled to ſay, they who were once renowned for conquering others, had made a ſhameful conqueſt of themſelves.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer ſaid, he was led by a ſenſe of public duty to anſwer ſome of the obſervations of the Right Honourable Gentleman who had juſt ſat down, and to ſtate, free from obſcurity or diſguiſe, the true nature of the Bill, its object and proviſions. He would, however, at that late hour trouble the Houſe with as few obſervations as poſſible. He agreed with the Right Honourable Gentleman, that the time when theſe Bills were to be enacted, formed a criſis in the political hiſtory of the country; no doubt an important criſis, when a ſet of dangerous and deſigning men with unprecedented attacks were ſeeking to deſtroy the old and venerable Conſtitution of the country.

The queſtion then was, whether the King, Lords, and Commons of this country, reſorting to the wiſdom of their anceſtors, from whom they derived the inheritance of their Government, ſhould, with wholeſome enactments, meet the dangers which threatened it; or whether they ſhould prevent a ſubtle and deſigning enemy from deſtroying it; whether, when their enemies aſſumed a maſk and now carry on thoſe deſigns ſecretly, which no long time had elapſed ſince they carried on openly, the King, Lords, and Commons of Great Britain ſhould ſnatch the Conſtitution from their graſp, or ſurrender it to be mangled and torn by theſe deteſted ſpoliators. One Gentleman (Mr. Jekyll) in a ſpeech apparently ſtudied, with a great deal of prepared and elaborate attack, had declared the Bills to be infernal, and uſed terms which, if meant to characteriſe thoſe Bills, were too hyperbolical for the effuſions of practical exaggeration. Another Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Sheridan) who had always been the champion excluſively of the democratic part of the Britiſh Conſtitution, had ſaid,

that

that if he was by rank entitled to demand an audience, he would beſeech the King to exert that power veſted in him by the Conſtitution, of putting his negative on theſe Bills. What! did the Honourable Gentleman think it would be decorous in a grave hereditary Counſellor of the Crown, to go to his Majeſty with his advice to reject theſe Bills, which were to be offered to him by the oher two branches of the Legiſlature, as a teſtimony of their concern for the ſafety of his royal perſon, and which comprehended a ſalutary enactment in ſupport of their own Conſtitutional rights? That Honourable Gentleman had gone ſo far as to ſay that ſuch a Counſellor would receive immortal honour by ſuch advice. The Right Honourable Gentleman who ſpoke laſt, would adviſe his Majeſty not to put his negative on the Bills, but immediately to diſſolve his Parliament, which he ſaid was his conſtitutional right. It certainly was part of the powers and prerogative of the Crown to diſſolve the Parliament; but there had been a time when that Right Honourable Gentleman was not quite ſo well convinced that ſuch diſſolution was an unqueſtionable exerciſe of a juſt prerogative; on the contrary, when the loud voice of the people was heard from all quarters, about twelve years ago, againſt a particular public meaſure, that Honourable Gentleman not only queſtioned the conſtitutional right to diſſolve in ſuch circumſtances, but branded the diſſolution which took place as perfectly unconſtitutional. If his Majeſty ſhould have adviſers that would give ſuch council, he would only ſay, that they would not be thoſe who were in the habit of giving his Majeſty advice, and were reſponſible for the advice they gave.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proceeded in ſubſtance as follows: "A ſtrong proof to me that the criſis to which I have referred is determined, is the different language which I now find to be held by the Right Honourable Gentleman, (Mr. Fox.) He has no longer any hopes to prevent the Bills from being enacted, but he truſts to the people in order to have them ſpeedily repealed. I am glad to find that the Right Honourable Gentleman is become ſo far a convert to the ſyſtem of moderation, that he looks to ſee how many he can bring to concur with him in endeavouring to procure the repeal of the Bills, if they ſhould paſs into laws, and not with how many he may think it prudent to reſiſt their operation. I am glad to find that this doctrine of reſiſtance, on which ſo much ſtreſs was laid in an earlier ſtage of the buſineſs, is not at this time uppermoſt in the mind of the Right Honourable Gentleman. I truſt that the avowal and juſtification of this doctrine will not ſink deeper in the minds of any part of the community, and

produce that impression which such a principle is calculated to make on violent and unenlightened minds. Should their ignorance be misled and their passions enflamed, dreadful indeed may be the consequences on their future conduct. I trust that the danger which was incurred to the peace, will operate as a warning to prevent Gentlemen from rashly and hastily broaching doctrines in the heat of debate, which might produce the most pernicious effects on the minds of others, long after their better judgment and more mature deliberation had eradicated them from their own.

Having noticed these general topics, I proceed now more particularly to consider the nature of the present Bill. The subject resolves itself into two points. I shall first advert to that part of the Bill which affects the existing law of treason; and secondly, to the particular species of misdemeanor to which the Bill is calculated to apply. First, the Bill makes a conspiracy to do any thing that may tend to the King's death, to maim or to do him any species of bodily injury, to restrain and imprison his person, or to seek to make him alter, by force, the measures of his Government a substantive treason. These by the statute of the 15th of Edward III. were only made overt acts, of compassing and imagining the King's death. By the present Bill they are made direct and substantive treasons. By the other part of the Bill it was made treason to levy war, to overawe the Legislature. The Right Honourable Gentleman had asked, might not the people attempt to influence the decision of the Legislature by the force of opinion, by the violence of prayer? He forgets that the Bill does not preclude the people from any peaceable and legal mode of bringing forward their opinion, in order to influence the sentiments of the Legislature; that it does not interfere with their right, or prevent them from carrying to their Representatives, in decent and orderly language, their sense of public measures. The treason described by the Bill attaches only to those who levy war in order to overawe the Legislature. Will the Honourable Gentleman contend, that levying war has any connection with that mode of expressing opinion which is intended to influence the proceedings of a Legislative Body? The Right Honourable Gentleman objects to the preamble, which, by the bye, he seems not to have read (Mr. Fox expressed some indignation at this charge).—I did not mean, continued the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the Right Honourable Gentleman ought to have read the preamble as part of his speech; but undoubtedly he seems not to have attended to the latter part of that preamble. He said, that he liked no preamble that did not state truth. He affirmed, that the preamble made the attack on his Majesty

Majesty the foundation of the Bill, and contended, that though the Bill purported to be for the security of his Majesty's Person, and the preservation of his Government, it did not, in fact, tend to give to either any additional security. If the Right Honourable Gentleman had gone farther, and read the latter part of the preamble, he would have found, that it was not so narrowed and confined as he had described; that it stated not only the attack on his Majesty as the ground of the Bill, but also the seditious speeches and publications of evil-disposed persons. In opposition to the Right Honourable Gentleman, I maintain, that the provisions of the Bill are calculated to give greater security to his Majesty's Person and Government, and that the grounds stated in the preamble are commensurate to all the objects which the Bill has in view. In all times when the Person of the Sovereign has been supposed to be endangered, a law in those terms has been passed. We are not now, for the first time, bringing forward a speculative Act, of the probable consequences of which we cannot pretend to judge; but we are copying the wisdom of our ancestors; we are adopting the salutary precautions of former times. Acts, of which this is a transcript, were passed in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and Charles the Second. Elizabeth has been reproached as an arbitrary Princess. It is certain that her life was threatened from many quarters. But how far is the charge, that this Act is a weak and inefficient measure, consistent with the description which has been given of her character? If she was an arbitrary Princess, it surely is not likely that, where her own preservation was concerned, she should adopt measures inadequate to the purpose. The Parliament of Charles the Second has been accused with making many sacrifices to the Throne. It is not, therefore, probable that, in the excess of their loyalty, and the superabundance of their zeal, they should have neglected to put a sufficient guard around the King's person. Thus does the reasoning of those Gentlemen, so far at least as concerns the efficacy of the measure, retort upon themselves. Such laws having passed in different periods of our history, and having in no instance been found insufficient, we have a strong and well-grounded presumption that they are well calculated to afford security to the Person of the Sovereign. They apply directly the penalties of treason to that species of offence against the Person of the Sovereign, to which before they could only have circuitously been brought to attach. They constitute those acts substantive treasons, which before could only have been brought to prove the criminal intention. But an instance yet fresh in our memories, and which made too deep an impression on the House to be easily forgotten, will best

best illustrate the proposition. Supposing the person who threw the stone at his Majesty, on his way to Parliament, to have been discovered and brought to trial, he would not have wanted an able and eloquent Advocate to have pleaded, "that by throwing the stone he had no intention of seriously injuring the person of the Sovereign; that he was actuated by no deliberate, malicious purpose; that he was carried away by the impulse of the moment; that he meant by throwing the stone, only to mark more strongly that sentiment of indignity to his Majesty, which excited the clamours of disapprobation among the surrounding multitude, and to express his own feelings of resentment from the continuance of the war." It is possible (I do not say that it would be justified by the sound construction of the law) even that such a defence, dressed up with ingenuity, and enforced with the eloquence with which it would not fail to be supported, might induce an honest Jury to pronounce a verdict of acquittal. The intention of this Bill was to cut off the possibility of such a defence being made in extenuation of such an act, to remove from the offender all hopes of escape by subterfuge and evasion, and by making the remedy more simple, to diminish the danger. But it was said, why not make a new declaratory law? It was necessary that the present should be an enacting and not a declaratory law, because it only made that which was already treason by the 25th of Edward the Third, treason under another branch, and to be laid in a different manner in the indictment. As to the present Bill making new treasons, which were not before known to the law of England, in contradiction to so injurious an assertion, he referred to the writings of Lord Hale and Sir Matthew Foster. These learned and venerable Judges had given a history of the different statutes of treason, accompanied with their own comments. The object of the present Bill was clearly to define the true meaning of the old law, which was now only to be drawn out of a long series of judicial expositions. It was in order to guard against all ambiguous and doubtful interpretation, at a time when it was necessary to provide against a positive and immediate danger. Must not such be felt to be the case, when a daring attack has so recently been made on his Majesty, and when the instance of the precise danger against which the Bill is directed happened under our own eyes, and at the door of Parliament. The Bill also made an attempt to overawe the Legislature, high treason. Was it necessary, by any long deduction of argument, to prove the necessity of such a precaution at a moment when there existed societies hostile to the authority and existence of Parliament: Those societies, meeting under the specious pretexts of Parliamentary Reform, and the

Right

Right of Petitioning, employed a language which sufficiently ſhewed how far thoſe were their real objects. They declared that the five hundred and eighty-eight gentlemen of St. Stephen's Chapel might go about their buſineſs. They took every opportunity to villify the character of the legiſlative body, to expreſs their contempt of its authority, and to ſhew how much they were diſpoſed to uſurp its functions, and, if poſſible, annihilate its exiſtence. The Right Hon. Gentleman has dealt much in general topics of declamation. He ſaid that he had never found that the lives of Princes had been ſafe in proportion to the ſanguinary laws and the ſevere puniſhments which had been inſtituted for their protection. Thus, I muſt remark, that the preſent is no new ſanguinary law, that it creates no extraordinary ſeverity of puniſhment. If the Right Hon. Gentleman thinks that the Perſon of the Sovereign is not rendered ſafer by the puniſhments which the law has deviſed for his protection, this argument goes to repeal all the exiſting laws of treaſon. He chuſes, however, to appeal to the teſtimony of experience, and to the example of former periods of the hiſtory of this country. He aſks whether, notwithſtanding the exceſſive loyalty of the Parliament, and the extreme vigour of the laws, there were not ſome real plots in the reign of Charles II. beſides the ſham plots that were brought forward to ſerve a particular purpoſe. That in the courſe of that reign the Parliament made many ſhameful conceſſions, I am ready to admit; but I can by no means allow that it was a blind, indiſcriminating ſpirit of devotion to the Monarch which gave riſe to the Act, of which the Bill is the counterpart. Neither can I allow that theſe perſons, who were concerned in effecting the Reſtoration, left principles altogether out of their view, though, perhaps, they neglected to employ ſome precautions which it would have been wiſe and proper to have adopted. In order to prove that ſome regard was had to principles in the Act of the Reſtoration, it is only neceſſary to refer to the hiſtory of the times, and to the perſons concerned in that event. Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and thoſe who were connected with him, were not men entirely indifferent about the Engliſh Conſtitution, or likely to be parties in a tranſaction, where its principles were entirely left out of contemplation. But with reſpect to this particular Act, he had the ſanction of the venerable name of Serjeant Maynard, who was one of the perſons then employed in framing the Bill for the ſecurity of his Majeſty's Perſon. Immediately after the Reſtoration, this truly conſtitutional Lawyer had ſaid, "That except for that event he had been on the eve not only of ſurviving Lawyers, but the laws." The Chancellor of the Exchequer was reminded that theſe words were ſpoken not after the Reſtoration, but after the

Revolution. I admit my error—theſe words were ſpoken after the Revolution; and is it likely that the venerable perſon, who, during the courſe of a long and honourable life, had preſerved his attachment to the Conſtitution, ſhould have ſo entirely forgotten its ſpirit, or departed from its principles, in framing that Bill which had ſo frequently been referred to in the diſcuſſion? But I will aſk the Right Hon. Gentleman, does he attribute the plots in the time of Charles II. to the adoption of new laws, and the unuſual ſeverity of puniſhment? or does he not rather attribute them to the repeated breaches of law committed by that Monarch, and to the attempts which he made, at different periods of his reign, to govern without a Parliament? Among his other alluſions to hiſtory, the Right Honourable Gentleman refers to the reign of Roberſpierre. He aſks, whether that tyrant derived any ſecurity from that ſyſtem of terror which he employed as the engine of his Government, and which he ſupported by a large military force? I appeal to the Houſe, how far this alluſion can, with any propriety, apply to the preſent diſcuſſion? I appeal to the Houſe, how far the queſtion, whether a lawleſs, wanton, and barbarous ſyſtem of proſcription and carnage, is calculated to afford ſecurity to the tyranny from which it originates--can poſſibly bear a compariſon with the effect of thoſe regulations which we are now employed in enacting for the ſecurity of his Majeſty's Perſon, who is the object of the affections of his people, and for the preſervation of that Government, which is the beſt pledge for their happineſs. I ſhall now very ſhortly advert to the ſecond part of the Bill, which relates to miſdemeanors. The firſt queſtion is, whether, in any poſſible caſe of miſdemeanor, tranſportation is a puniſhment which ought to be left to the diſcretion of the court. Miſdemeanors are undoubtedly of very different ſorts, and unleſs they can be marked out and graduated by ſome ſcale of legiſlative regulation, it is neceſſary that, in adjuſting the puniſhment, ſomething ſhould be left to diſcretion. The miſdemeanors againſt which the preſent Bill is directed are of the moſt ſerious deſcription. They are thoſe offences which are productive of the worſt conſequences, which militate againſt the welfare of the whole community, which are calculated to diſturb the order, and interrupt the tranquillity of ſociety. If we look to the ordinary operation of law, and compare the ſpecies of miſdemeanors deſcribed in this Bill, with other offences which are at preſent puniſhable with tranſportation, I appeal to the Houſe whether thoſe offences, either in point of moral guilt, or of public danger, are to be compared to the acts againſt which this Bill is calculated to guard. The Right Hon. Gentleman has deſcanted on the hard-

ſhip of the ſentence, and talked of the compaſſion due to individuals who, from having been placed in a better ſituation of life, had been doomed to experience its rigours. That it is a ſentence at all times ſevere in its operation I cannot but admit; that it becomes more particularly ſo when the perſon who is its object has been placed in a reſpectable and comfortable ſituation; that ſuch a perſon ſhould be compelled to abandon the ſociety to which he had been accuſtomed, for companions of a very different deſcription; that he ſhould be doomed to relinquiſh his native land, the comforts of his ſituation, and condemned to aſſociate with the rudeſt and vileſt of mankind, is a conſideration which muſt naturally impreſs every mind with compaſſion. But while we feel compaſſion for the individual, we muſt recollect, that, as Legiſlators, there is a duty which we owe to the public paramount to every other conſideration. We muſt recollect, that if the puniſhment riſes in proportion to the ſituation which the individual held in ſociety, and that if our pity is more ſtrongly excited from the conſideration of theſe advantages he has forfeited, ſo alſo is the enormity of the crime aggravated by the ſame conſideration; and he, who, being placed in a reſpectable and comfortable ſituation, ſubjects himſelf to the penalties of law, wanting the temptation to err, wants alſo the apology for offence. If the ignorant and unenlightened individual, the blind and deluded inſtrument, is doomed to puniſhment for the crime, which, from the inſtruction or the example of others, he has learned to regard as a virtue, with what ſentiments muſt we look to the maſter workman, who perverts the advantages of education, abuſes the talents of nature, and employs the very diſtinctions, which he derives from the preſent order of ſociety, as means of attack againſt the exiſtence of ſociety itſelf? I have only to call upon the Houſe, to conſider what is the deſcription of offence againſt which the puniſhment is directed. It is not to apply twice to the offence that may have previouſly been committed, but to the ſecond inſtance of offence after conviction. An objection was ſtarted that the ſpecies of crimes comprehended under the preſent Bill, was of a deſcription of the nature of which it was not within the province of a Jury to judge. His Hon. Friend, the Attorney-General, has ſtated to the Houſe what is his own practice. He has always left to the Jury to decide whether the innocent cauſe aſſigned was the real motive of the action; but in ſtating this, he had ſtated not only that mode of practice which is conformable to the liberality of his own ſentiments, but which is ſanctioned by the liberal ſpirit of the laws of England. There is no legal privilege which may not be made the pretext to cover the moſt illegal actions.

actions. I must particularly remark, in order to obviate misrepresentation, that nothing is made a crime by the present Bill which was not before criminal, and subjected to a severe punishment, by the common law of England. After what I have already said, I have nothing further to add, as I conceive the present Bill to be supported on the plainest and simplest grounds on which any legislative provision was ever offered to this House."

Mr. Fox rose to explain. He said that the Minister had taken the liberty to say that he had that night rather considered what means to take for the repeal of those Bills, than to see how many agree with him to resist: "Now," said Mr. Fox, "this is one of the most gross misrepresentations that even he ever made against me; so gross that I hardly know how to behave to him upon it. I do not know how to believe that any man who has the feelings or the candour of a Gentleman could state this. Is there another man in this House, who will say, that this a real statement of what I said? Did I say so, or even any thing like it? I wish Gentlemen would do me justice. Did I say any thing like what has been to-night imputed to me? Did I not state the direct contrary, as to the doctrine of resistance at least? I ask this, because I will not repeat all that I said upon that subject. But lest some persons may affect to say that I have changed my opinion upon that subject, I will state again---that if acts pass, of the description of this which is now before, and that which has passed this House, which are manifestly to subvert the Constitution of this country, by a majority of Parliament, against the decided will of the people; and they have no regular means of recovering their liberties, my opinion is, that then resistance is a matter of prudence and not of morality. I certainly stated this opinion generally."

Mr. Chancellor Pitt said, that he was certainly glad to hear the Right Hon. Gentleman declare himself of a different opinion from what he had formerly adopted. He had formerly stated, that if the majority of the people were against the Bills, resistance was then not a question of morality but of prudence. This declaration appeared the more striking, coupled with an intimation which had been made by the Right Hon. Gentleman, that he would endeavour by all means to procure a majority, in order to resist the present Bills, both within and without doors. By this declaration it appeared, that he was disposed to take what steps depended upon him, in order to bring the question of resistance to an issue; such a conduct, to give it no worse turn, he must at best consider as the height of imprudence.

 Mr.

Mr. Fox.—If my expreſſions are to be made thus formal, I inſiſt that they be ſtated fairly; I will repeat them. What I ſaid was, if theſe Bills be, as I think them to be, paſſed againſt the decided majority of the country, and executed to the extent of their proviſions, (There being a loud cry of hear! hear!) He proceeded, " I deſire that my words may be taken down; good God, Sir, this is the ſecond time I have been miſrepreſented this very night, and I inſiſt on being heard now. It is aſtoniſhing, after repeated explanation, theſe miſrepreſentations ſhould inceſſantly be repeated. I appeal to every man of honour in this Houſe. I aſk if I did not ſay, to the extent of their proviſions, and by which all Engliſhmen would be prevented from enjoying their right? Whether I did not then ſay, I think it will be a queſtion, not of morality, but of prudence, to reſiſt? And when that was taken notice of, I made uſe of a quotation,

" *Iniquiſſimam pacem juſtiſſimo bello antefero.*"

I own there was ſomething of a ſtratagem in this; I made uſe of it in order preciſely to mark the ſentiments which I meant to expreſs, becauſe I was determined not to be miſrepreſented, as I have found there are ſome perſons who wiſh to miſrepreſent me. I wiſh it again to be underſtood, that I did not recommend any reſiſtance, as that quotation clearly proves. But what I moſt complain of is, that I ſhould be repreſented as having gone back from that doctrine which I ſtated on a former occaſion, with reſpect to reſiſtance; as often as that miſrepreſentation is made, will I renew the declaration, that if the King, Lords, and Commons, ſhall paſs a law contrary to the great and decided majority of the people, and leaving to them no means of peaceable and legal redreſs, it then becomes their duty to reſiſt its operation. This is a right inherent in the people of this country, and which I think applicable to the preſent Bills."

Mr. Sheridan propoſed a clauſe, applying the enactment of the preſent Bill to Scotland, in order to remove from the Judges that arbitrary and diſcretional power which they had formerly exerciſed.

The Houſe divided,

For the clauſe, 27. Againſt it, 184.

The Bill was read a third time and paſſed.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

FRIDAY, DEC. 11.

The Earl of Upper Ossory preſented a Counter-Petition from the Freeholders of Bedfordſhire, and the Earl of Derby one

one against the Bills from Manchester: upon both a conversation of considerable length ensued, after which they were read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE rose to present a Petition from Edinburgh, signed by 8000 inhabitants, which he had mentioned on a former day; but before he desired that it might be read, he wished to say a few words, because much more than common arts had been used to prevent people from signing it, and inducing them to sign the other Petition presented by a Noble Duke. To convince the House that no unfair means had been used to get signatures to this Petition, and that no improper persons, or any under age, had been allowed to sign it, he would read a certificate to that effect, signed by the Committee appointed to inspect the signing of it, and when he read their names, he was sure there were many Noble Lords who must know that they were as respectable as any that could be mentioned—they were, James Mansfield, Henry Erskine, Charles Hay, Robert Ferguson, and a few more, equally well known and respected. When he said that nobody had signed it that was not of sufficient age, it was because some very young gentlemen, who thought it would be a manly thing to have their names there, had wished to sign it, but were told that, from their youth, they could not be admitted, had afterwards gone and signed the other Petition. Here the Noble Lord paid many just compliments to the Honourable Henry Erskine, and lamented much that any political opinions or Ministerial cabals should have interrupted the independence that so long prevailed in that Faculty, which he had always held the highest opinion of, as a member of it: but their principles and character were so much changed, that no man of common sense could think it any pride to belong to them. He reminded the Noble Duke (Portland) to remember the intimacy that had always subsisted between the Learned Gentleman and his Grace, and was not very anxious to share his feelings on this occasion. He remarked that the opposition to his Learned Friend had arisen, and that the letter was written and signed by eight men who were either under the immediate influence of Government, or had been under obligations to the present Ministers.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR wished to avoid personality, and admitted the talents and abilities of the Learned Gentleman alluded to; but he did not think there was enough before the House to decide upon the propriety or otherwise of his conduct upon a late occasion; neither ought blame to be laid to those Gentlemen who had disapproved of his conduct: he knew only one of the eight Gentlemen, and he was sure he had nothing under or to expect from Ministers;

Miniſters; he could not ſuppoſe that the Noble Lord had any alluſion to Mr. Hume.

The Earl of Lauderdale ſaid, that his perſonal regard for Mr. Hume was ſuch that nobody could ſuſpect, nor would he be allowed to ſay that he meant any diſrepect to that Gentleman, however much they might have differed upon particular queſtions.

The Earl of Hopetoun complained that Dr. Monro's name was at the Petition, and read an affidavit, ſtating that he had never ſeen it; but he did not ſtate, nor did it appear that his name was there. The Petition was then read, and ordered to lie upon the Table.

The Order of the Day for the Houſe to reſolve itſelf into a Committee on the Bill to prevent Seditious Meetings was read, and Lord Walſingham took the Chair. Their Lordſhips proceeded in the different clauſes, upon each of which ſome debate enſued, in which Lord Thurlow, Lord Lauderdale, the Duke of Norfolk, Duke of Leeds, the Lord Chancellor, Lord Grenville, Lord Kenyon, Lord Spencer, and Lord Hawkeſbury, bore the moſt conſiderable part.

In the clauſe which gives to the Sheriffs, &c. of Scotland the ſame powers as thoſe in England, the Earl of Lauderdale pointed out the concluding words of the clauſe, viz. "And that all and every perſon and perſons who ſhall at any time be convicted of any of the offences *afore-mentioned* within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, ſhall, for every ſuch offence, incur and ſuffer the pain of death and confiſcation of moveables." The Noble Lord ſhewed, that by this clauſe the people of Scotland were to ſuffer death for offences, which, by the ſame Bill, were in England to ſubject perſons to a fine of fifty pounds. Diſtinctions of offences were made for England. Some were to incur fines, ſome the penalty of death; but by this clauſe a general, undiſtinguiſhing doom of death was pronounced on the Scots for all the offences of the Bill; he moved therefore to amend it.

Earl Mansfield and the Lord Chancellor contended, that the Noble Lord was not juſtified in this interpretation.

Lord Thurlow declared, that in his mind it could bear no other conſtruction, and he was ſurpriſed to hear Noble Lords reſiſt what was ſo obvious. Clearly it could not be the dreadful intention of the Authors of the Bill, and therefore it was their duty to correct a clauſe, which, by being ſo looſely worded, might produce conſequences ſo dreadful. The Scotch Judges had ſhewn themſelves diſpoſed to conſtrue Acts of Parliament wth ſufficient latitude

tude, and their Lordſhips could not be too preciſe in the wording of an Act of this importance.

THE BISHOP OF ROCHESTER agreed perfectly with the Noble and Learned Lord. The life of a fellow creature ſhould never be ſubject to the folly, the ignorance, or the iniquity of a Judge. It was a matter of conſcience to him not to vote for a clauſe, by the uncertain wording of which an innocent man might loſe his life; he ſhould feel that he dipt his hand in that man's blood.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR upon theſe obſervations yielded, and ſaid, that he ſhould take care that before the third reading the objectionable clauſe ſhould be removed; and he wiſhed in the mean time the amendment to be removed: to which Lord Lauderdale conſented; but Lord Thurlow, in a moſt warm and animated manner, upbraided Miniſters for their obſtinacy in not accepting amendments to a Bill of this alarming tendency, even when they were convinced of the neceſſity of ſuch amendments.

In the limitation clauſe the DUKE OF NORFOLK moved, that inſtead of "three years," the words "one year," ſhould be ſubſtituted.

This amendment was ſupported by Lords Darnley, Scarborough, Radnor, and Romney; and oppoſed by Lords Grenville, Spencer, and Mulgrave.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK replied, and inſiſted on taking the ſenſe of the Committee.

On a diviſion there appeared for the amendment,

Contents 8—Not Contents 45.

The other clauſes of the Bill being gone through, the Report was received, and the Bill ordered to be read a third time on Monday next.——Adjourned.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

AT a General Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants of the County of BEDFORD, holden at the Shire Hall on Monday, Dec. 7, 1795,

The Duke of BEDFORD in the Chair,

Reſolved, That the following Addreſs and Petition to the King's Moſt Excellent Majeſty be adopted by this Meeting, and that his Grace the Duke of Bedford, and the two Members for the County, be requeſted to preſent the ſame.

TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

Moſt Gracious Sovereign,

We, the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County of Bedford, beg leave to approach your Majeſty with ſentiments of loyalty and attachment to your perſon, and with ardent wiſhes for the long continuance of your reign.

We

We have heard, with indignation and horror, the outrages offered to your Majeſty on your paſſage to Parliament, and that a band of miſcreants menaced the days of a Monarch, whoſe reign has been peculiarly diſtinguiſhed by the exerciſe of thoſe private virtues which promote benevolence and harmony among mankind.

We fear not that your Majeſty ſhould miſtake the turbulence of a few deſperate men for the voice of your People.

Your Majeſty has filled the Throne during the ſpace of thirty-ſix years—great and awful events have marked that period—events which muſt have convinced your Majeſty that our affections have encreaſed with your years, and were placed beyond the viciſſitudes of our fortune. Very ſmall and contemptible are their numbers whoſe diſcontents are directed againſt your Majeſty. To attribute to your Majeſty the benefits and bleſſings we have enjoyed, and to charge upon your adviſers the calamities with which we have been afflicted, ſcarcely required in the minds of the great body of your ſubjects the ſanction of a Conſtitutional precept: we never will confound the virtues which adorn your Majeſty with the miſdeeds of thoſe adviſers, nor admit the claim of any man to our ſupport, by ſuffering them to interweave with the exiſtence of the Conſtitution the duration of their individual power.

That great diſcontents prevail among your Majeſty's ſubjects, that they are increaſing rapidly and to a very fearful heighth, are truths which it were uſeleſs to deny, and dangerous any longer to diſſemble; but we believe that they differ widely in their origin, their object, and their ſpirit from thoſe ſo recently manifeſted in acts of fury and atrocity, which are a diſgrace to the Britiſh name. Order, it is true, prevails, and the public tranquillity has hitherto been undiſturbed, but we much fear that in many parts of your Majeſty's dominions ſcenes are exhibited of unexampled indigence and miſfortune. Could your Majeſty but viſit thoſe ſcenes, you would witneſs not the boiſterous clamour of ſedition, but the ſilent endurance of nakedneſs and famine; your ſteps would be followed, not by a horde of ruffians, but by a patient, though a ſuffering and over-burthened People, who in the midſt of anguiſh and diſtreſs, ceaſe not to call for bleſſings on your perſon, and to offer prayers for your preſervation. Your Majeſty would then learn to diſtinguiſh the cries of wretchedneſs and of want from the jargon of diſaffection and of anarchy; your Royal heart would be touched with pity, and you would haſten to put an end to a war, the certain and fatal ſource of all theſe miſchiefs.

Deeply impreſſed with theſe conſiderations, and preſenting ourſelves on this occaſion to your Majeſty, with hearts devoted to your defence, we implore your Majeſty to take thoſe ſteps which, by healing the wounds and the diſtraction of your country, may enſure to you the long enjoyment of that tranquillity of mind to which your Majeſty is ſo juſtly entitled, by your paternal affection towards your People; and we humbly hope that your Majeſty will give immediate directions to open a negociation, with a view to the concluſion of a Peace on terms honourable and ſafe to this country.

Reſolved, That the following Petition to the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal againſt the Bills now pending in Parliament, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies,"

Aſſemblies," be adopted by this Meeting, and that his Grace the Duke of Bedford be requeſted to preſent the ſame.

To the Right Honourable the LORDS Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of BEDFORD,

SHEWETH,

That the ſuperior rank and importance of Great Britain in the ſcale of the nations of the world have depended upon the uncommon excellence of our Conſtitution, the ſpirit of which recognizes a due balance between the legal prerogatives of the King, and the rights and liberties of the ſubject, which can alone be maintained by open, frequent and unreſtrained communications between the people and the legiſlative body.

That ſuch communications were conſidered at the æra of the glorious Revolution in 1688, as a part of that wiſe and happy ſyſtem which placed the illuſtrious Houſe of Brunſwick upon the Throne of theſe Realms, appears by the Bill of Rights.

That we have obſerved with the deepeſt concern two Bills introduced into Parliament, the one entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts," repugnant, as we conceive, to the mild ſpirit of our laws, by creating new and accumulated treaſons, and in no way tending to give additional ſecurity to the Perſon of his Majeſty; the other, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies," which in its ſpirit and tendency is in our opinion ſubverſive of the true principles of that Revolution, by ſubjecting free deliberation upon laws or grievances to checks and controul, as unprecedented as they are incompatible with fair diſcuſſion, and the right of private judgment, and thereby alienating the affection of the people from the Conſtitution, and leſſening their reſpect for the laws.

That the laws now in force are fully adequate to the ſecurity of his Majeſty's Perſon, and ſufficient to reſtrain or puniſh the improper uſe or licentious abuſe of the Conſtitutional Right of the People to prefer their Petitions, or preſent their Remonſtrance to all or any of the Branches of the Legiſlature.

Therefore we do humbly pray your Lordſhips that the ſaid Bills may not paſs into laws.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Thanks of the Meeting be given to the Chairman for his upright, able and impartial conduct in the Chair.

Signed by the Duke of Bedford, the Chairman, at the requeſt of the Meeting.

BEDFORD.

BEDFORD COUNTY MEETING.

AT a numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County of BEDFORD, on Monday the 7th inſtant, an Addreſs to his Majeſty, on the late outrage on his Perſon, and imploring him to enter into a negociation for Peace, was almoſt unanimouſly agreed to; as was a Petition to the Houſe of Lords againſt the two Bills now pending in Parliament, affecting the Right of Petitioning, and the Liberty of the Preſs.

This

This Meeting was called by requifition to the Sheriff, figned by the Duke of Bedford, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Pym, Mr. Barnetts, &c. defiring the attendance of the Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants of the County.

The Sheriff, for reafons beft known to himfelf, chofe to omit, in the requifition, the Inhabitants, and the Addrefs for Peace.

The bufinefs being opened by the Sheriff reading the requifition, as altered,

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD rofe, and obferved, that in the requifition fent to the Sheriff, the Inhabitants of the County were included, and an Addrefs for Peace: he therefore called upon the Sheriff to read the original requifition, and to ftate the reafons why the alterations were made.

THE SHERIFF pleaded in excufe, that there was not time to convene the Inhabitants.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD, in reply, obferved, that as the Freeholders were not confined to any particular part of the county, the fame means of giving them notice would alfo inform the Inhabitants at large of the Meeting; and even if the Sheriff wifhed, he could not have confined it to that particular clafs: that the Inhabitants of the County, not Freeholders, were by far the moft numerous; and he thought it extremely unjuft that they fhould be deprived of the opportunity, at this momentous crifis, of congratulating his Majefty on his providential efcape from the late daring outrage on his Royal Perfon—of offering their humble intreaties to his Majefty to reftore to them the bleffings of Peace, and to petition the Houfe of Lords againft the two Bills now pending in Parliament—if they believed, as he moft affuredly did, they tended to deftroy the deareft privileges of Britons. His Grace alfo obferved, that in the year 1789, when his Majefty had juft recovered from an alarming illnefs, a fimilar Meeting was called, to exprefs their gratitude to Providence for the recovery of their Sovereign; and on a fuggeftion that it was cruel to deprive the Inhabitants of this, their only mode of conveying their fentiments to the Throne, they were, at the requeft of the Sheriff, included. The Duke therefore begged leave to move, "That the Inhabitants be invited to join in the proceedings of the day."

MR. WHITBREAD, jun. in a fpeech replete with found argument, and delivered with great animation, feconded the motion, which was carried with only five diffentients.

THE SHERIFF then faid, as the Inhabitants, contrary to his requifition, were included, he fhould leave the Chair, which, at the requeft of the company, was taken by the DUKE OF BEDFORD, who after defcanting on the enormity of the outrage offered to his Majefty's Perfon, which every man muft lament, and on the confequent miferies of the prefent deftructive and calamitous War, fubmitted to the Meeting an Addrefs to his Majefty, which, for its true fpirit of loyalty to the Sovereign, and benevolence to mankind, we hefitate not to fay has never been excelled.

On the queftion being put from the Chair, that this Addrefs be prefented, only feven hands were held up againft it.

His Grace with much pleafantry obferved, that one perfon, in his zeal for the continuance of the War, held up both his hands; and added, if the War continued much longer, he would have ample occafion for the ufe of both his hands to keep himfelf from ftarving.

MR.

Mr. Whitbread entered into an animated difcuffion of the two Bills, fpeaking with the utmoft abhorrence of the penalties ; and of the power of the Magiftrates, the conduct of the Sheriff, in leaving the Chair, afforded a ftriking inftance. The Meeting, from that circumftance, after the Bill paffed, would be illegal ; and the company prefent, though fo peaceably and conftitutionally affembled for the purpofe of petitioning, might, in a fhort time, be liable to be fhot or hanged! Mr. Whitbread then read the Petition, which was feconded by

Mr. St. John, who, in an eloquent fpeech of upwards of an hour, of which we lament we can give but a faint fketch, entered into an inveftigation of the conduct of Adminiftration, and the evil tendency of the Bills.— "Gentlemen," faid Mr. St. John, "will you fo eafily part with your deareft privileges?—Will you fleep in fuppofed fecurity, and awake in chains?—I fee by the expreffive countenances of all around me, you will not. —The Bills we are now about to petition againft, I hefitate not to fay, are fubverfive of the Conftitution—nay, they repeal it!" He lamented himfelf, and doubted not but every perfon prefent did, the outrage on his Majefty's Perfon, and would render every affiftance to bring the mifcreant to juftice, for whofe punifhment the laws in force were fufficiently fevere. But were Minifters to punifh the whole country for the crime of that individual? The Bill was ftated to be for the better fecurity of his Majefty's Perfon. It was not by extending the penal laws of the country—it was not by depriving the people of their deareft rights, that his Majefty's Perfon was to be fecured, but by the affection of his fubjects; and he was forry the prefent Adminiftration were not convinced of this truth.—After fpeaking of the power of the Magiftrates, and punifhment of death for not difperfing, Mr. St. John came to the exceptions of the Bills, and declared that, as to himfelf, (excepted as a Member) he would maintain the Rights of the People while he lived. The Diffenters, he obferved, that truly refpectable body of people, were by this Bill excluded the Right of Petitioning.—A Diffenter could not act as a Magiftrate or a Sheriff, nor was it likely a Diffenter fhould be in a majority in a Grand Jury. He concluded by declaring, that when he confidered the penalties, he could not refrain from giving them the epithet of *Bloody Bills!*

The queftion was then put and carried, that the Petition be prefented by his Grace the Duke of Bedford to the Houfe of Lords; and the Thanks of the Meeting were unanimoufly voted to his Grace, for his upright and impartial conduct in the Chair.

PERTH, *Dec.* 3, 1795.

AT a numerous Meeting of the Inhabitants of this Town, called by Public Advertifement, held this day in the Taylor's Hall, to confider the propriety of petitioning the Legiflature refpecting the two Bills now pending in Parliament, and to reftore the bleffings of peace,

Mr. CHARLES YOUNG in the Chair,

The following Refolutions were moved and unanimoufly agreed to :—

Refolved, I. That the late attack on his Majefty, by whomfoever advifed or committed, has our decided reprobation.

II. That we confider the multiplicity of penal laws, which tend to counteract the progrefs of virtue and reafon, as no fecurity to any Government.

III. That

III. That the Bills now pending in Parliament, entitled, "An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government;" and, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Assemblies," are a daring attack on the Bill of Rights, and go far to destroy, if not entirely to annihilate, the liberties of the people.

IV. That having reason to apprehend we have not time to petition the two Houses of Parliament before these Bills pass, we therefore resolve to petition the King to withhold his assent from them.

V. That the present critical and distressed state of the country is, in a great measure, owing to his Majesty's Ministers, who have been the principle cause of involving and continuing the Nation in the present calamitous and ruinous war; therefore resolved to petition the King to dismiss them from his Council, and restore the blessings of peace.

A Petition to the King for these purposes being produced, deliberately considered, and unanimously approved of;

VI. Resolved, That it be immediately signed, and that the Duke of Bedford and the Honourable Thomas Erskine be requested to present the same to his Majesty.

VII. That our warmest Thanks are due to the Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Lauderdale, Mr. Fox, Mr. Erskine, Mr. Sheridan, and the other independent Members of both Houses of Parliament, who have so strenuously supported the Rights of the People.

VIII. Resolved, That these Resolutions be inserted in the Morning Chronicle and Star.

CHARLES YOUNG, President.

The President having left the Chair, the Thanks of the Meeting were testified by the loudest acclamations for his candid and impartial conduct.

The Petition mentioned in the above Resolutions was signed by above fifteen hundred persons.

BAKER'S HALL, *Dec.* 8.

AT a Special Court of the worshipful Company of BAKERS, held this day, at their Hall in Harp-Lane,

Resolved unanimously, That this Court, justly sensible of the happiness they enjoy under the present Government as by law established, and feeling with utter abhorrence the late outrageous attempt against the Person of his most Sacred Majesty, and being fully sensible that such outrages are encouraged by sundry evil-minded and seditious Persons, who have and still continue to inflame the minds of the People, particularly by Meetings and Assemblies held for that purpose, against the happiness and prosperity of this country, do think it their duty publicly to declare their full confidence in the wisdom of Parliament, that such laws will from time to time be enacted as will tend effectually to suppress such Meetings and Assemblies, to secure the Sacred Person of his Majesty, and to hand down inviolate to our posterity that Constitution which has been the foundation of the happiness and prosperity of this kingdom and the admiration of the whole world.

MANCHESTER, *Dec.* 8.

IN consequence of the following Advertisement having appeared in the Manchester Papers, a most numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Towns of MANCHESTER, SALFORD, and the Neighbourhood, was

was held at the New Market Hall, in which the ſenſe of the public was never more decidedly and unequivocally aſcertained.

PUBLIC TOWN's MEETING.

Mancheſter, Dec. 1.

To the Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of MANCHESTER.

The Borough Reeve and one of the Conſtables of Mancheſter, having returned to the following requiſition the anſwer immediately ſubjoined to it, and the ſame Gentlemen having refuſed to ſhew the Counter-requiſition referred to, or to explain the impropriety of calling a Town's Meeting, which they ſay is ſo ſtrongly pointed out therein;

We, whoſe names are ſubſcribed, anxious that the public opinion ſhould be fairly taken on the alarming Bills now pending in Parliament, and on the deſtructive War in which the nation is unhappily engaged, requeſt that the Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of Mancheſter will meet together, at the New Market Hall, in Mancheſter, on Monday next, the 7th Inſt. at 11 o'clock in the Forenoon, for the purpoſe of conſidering the propriety of petitioning againſt the ſaid Bills, and praying the Legiſlature to uſe effectual means for reſtoring the bleſſings of Peace and plenty to this country.

George Lloyd
Joſhua Smith
George Philips
P. H. Harriſon
James Pilling
Thomas Kerſhaw
Joſeph Boardman
John Clegg
Herbert Edgar
James Smith
Thomas Walker
William Rigby
Joſeph Hanſon
Samuel Mather
Robert Norris
Samuel Jackſon
Robert Philips
William Seddon
J. Mitchell, M. D.
John Ridgway, jun.
John Mather
Richard Walker
R. Farrand
Samuel Marſland
Samuel Greg
Thomas Preſton
Thomas Bateman
James Norman
William Mitchell
S. Hegginbottam
James Kirkman
Abram Levy
James Lees
L. Buchan
Thomas Faulkner
John Naſh
James Hurſt
Thomas Froſt
Charles Stanley
George Duckworth
Richard Roberts
Joſeph Maſon
Falkner Philips
William Rawlinſon
Arthur Clegg
Joſeph Aſton
Samuel Barnes
John Branch
John Boyes
William Mouncey
William Fiſher.

JAMES ACKERS, Eſq. was unanimouſly called to the Chair, when the following Reſolutions were moved and agreed to:

Reſolved unanimouſly, That it is the opinion of this Meeting, that it appears highly improper to oppoſe the Meaſures adopted by Government for the ſecurity of his Majeſty Perſon, and the Prevention of Seditious Meetings; and we truſt that a Peace will be negociated, whenever it can be ſecured upon ſafe and honourable terms.

An Addreſs to his Majeſty was then unanimouſly reſolved.—[See Appendix.]

A Petition to the Right Honourable the Houſe of Lords was unanimouſly reſolved.

To the Right Honourable the LORDS Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament aſſembled.

The humble Petition of the Inhabitants of the Towns of MANCHESTER and SALFORD, and the Neighbourhood thereof,

Sheweth,

That your Petitioners have obſerved with the greateſt ſatisfaction, that two Bills are now depending in Parliament, the one for the more effectual ſecurity

ſecurity of his Majeſty's Perſon, and the other for the prevention of Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies.

That your Petitioners conceive, that great injury has been already done, and if the wiſdom of Parliament ſhould not timely interpoſe, that ſtill greater injury would be done to the nation by means of ſuch ſeditious Meetings and Aſſemblies, inaſmuch as they directly tend to alienate the affections of all orders of men from our excellent Conſtitution and Government, which ſo ſtrongly, and yet ſo mildly, protect every individual, from the higheſt to the loweſt of his Majeſty's ſubjects.

Your Petitioners humbly apprehend, that by reaſon of the wicked exertions of ſuch Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies, and in conſequence of the abominable doctrines they have ſo induſtriouſly circulated, that ſome inhuman traitors were inſtigated moſt outrageouſly to attack the life of our Gracious Sovereign, in his paſſage to the two Houſes of Parliament.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly conceive that the two Bills are wiſe, beneficial, and ſalutary, and at this momentous period are eſſentially neceſſary to guard us from all the horrors of anarchy, devaſtation and bloodſhed.

And your Petitioners humbly pray that each of the ſaid Bills may paſs into a law.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Duke of Bridgewater, and Lord Grey de Wilton, be requeſted to preſent this Petition to the Right Honourable the Houſe of Lords; and that the Chairman be deſired to tranſmit the ſame.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the above Addreſs and Petition be left for ſignatures at the Bull's Head, John Shaw's, Spencer's Tavern, Peter Fearnhead's, Mr. Harrop's, Mr. Wheeler's, Mr. Banck's, and the Court Houſe, in Salford.

Reſolved unanimouſly, That the Chairman be requeſted to ſign the above Reſolutions, and that theſe proceedings be advertiſed in Harrop's and Wheeler's Mancheſter Papers; and in the following London Papers, the Times, the Sun, the Star, and the Morning Chronicle.

JAMES ACKERS, Chairman.

The Chairman having left the Chair, it was taken by Joſeph Thackeray, Eſq. when it was

Unanimouſly reſolved, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to James Ackers, Eſq. for his very candid and impartial conduct on this occaſion.

JOS. THACKERAY, Chairman.

A PAPER having appeared in Harrop's Mancheſter Mercury, ſigned James Ackers, Chairman, in which it is ſtated that a moſt numerous and reſpectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Towns of Mancheſter, Salford, and the neighbourhood, was held at the New Market Hall, in Mancheſter, in conſequence of an advertiſement ſubſcribed by us and others, calling on the public to aſſemble there, for the purpoſe of conſidering the propriety of petitioning againſt the alarming Bills now pending in Parliament, and praying the Legiſlature to uſe effectual means for reſtoring the bleſſings of peace and plenty to this country; and it being further ſtated in the ſame Paper, that the ſenſe of the Public was "never more decidedly and unequivocally aſcertained" than at the ſaid Meeting, at which certain Reſolutions were paſſed, together with a Petition in favour of the Bills alluded to, and an Addreſs to his Majeſty,

We

We think ourselves called upon, by a regard to truth, to state the following facts for the information of the Public.

The Lord of the Manor having forbidden the use of the New Market Hall for the proposed Meeting, upwards of 8000 bills, of which the following is a copy, were circulated and posted up in the Town and Neighbourhood on Sunday the 6th instant, and early the next morning.

TOWN'S MEETING.

"The Lord of the Manor having refused the use of the New Market Hall, which his Agent had previously granted for the Town's Meeting, intended to be held there on Monday morning next, the 7th instant, to consider the propriety of petitioning against the alarming Bills now pending in Parliament, and praying the Legislature to use effectual means for restoring the blessings of peace and plenty to this country,

"The public are hereby informed, that the said Meeting will be held at eleven o'clock on the same morning, in a large plot of ground situate between St. John's Church and Castlefield, in Manchester.

"Saturday afternoon."

After this hand-bill had been circulated, the subjoined one was issued from a loyal Association, the Members of which could not be ignorant that the place appointed for the Meeting was changed, or unacquainted with the cause which rendered such a change necessary.

"The Loyal Association at the Bull's Head Inn, Manchester, invites all true friends of their King and Country to attend early this morning, Monday the 7th instant, at the New Market Hall, to support the two Bills now pending in the House of Lords, for the preservation of the best of Kings and happiest of Constitutions.

JOHN SEDGWICK, Chairman."

Dec. 7, 1795.

In consequence of the former hand-bill advertising the change of place, a Meeting was held near St. John's Church, Mr. Lloyd being the Chairman, which was the most numerous that we ever recollect seeing assembled in this Town, for the consideration of any public question. The motions made were regularly put both in the affirmative and negative, and carried by an immense majority against the Bills.

This plain statement of facts will shew what degree of credit is due to the correctness of the representation.

(Signed) JAMES ACKERS, Chairman.

We shall therefore make no comment on the subject, but leave the public to judge whether the Meeting at the New Market Hall can be considered as held in pursuance of the advertisement signed by us and others, and whether the sense of the public was more decidedly and unequivocally expressed at that Meeting, or at the other held near St. John's Church.

G. Lloyd,	J. Hanson,	Geo. Philips,
R. Walker,	R. Philips,	S. Jackson,
H. Edgar,	W. Seddon,	S. Mather,
T. Walker,	J. Smith,	T. Kershaw,
J. Nash,	J. Ridgway, jun.	J. Smith.

WIGTON, *Dec.* 1, 1795.

AT a Meeting of the Burgesses, Freemen, and Inhabitants of the Royal Borough of Wigton, met by public Advertisement in the Coffee-Room there,

there, to take into consideration the late daring insult offered to the Person of our most gracious Sovereign, and two Bills now pending in Parliament, one entitled " An Act for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts;" and the other " An Act to prevent Seditious Assemblies,"

ANDREW COWAN, of Crottangry, in the Chair,

It was unanimously Resolved, That the Meeting, impressed with the warmest attachment to his Majesty and Government, most sincerely lament the late daring outrage offered to his Sacred Person, and will be ready to give their utmost assistance in bringing the perpetrators to exemplary punishment.

That the Meeting, having considered the tendency of these two Bills, are of opinion, that they are fraught with the greatest danger to our happy Constitution, and that, if passed into a law, they will destroy the Bill of Rights, and the dearest of our privileges happily settled at the glorious Revolution in 1688. That so far from serving the purpose of their specious title, " Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Attempts," the Meeting are apprehensive they may have a very different tendency; the safety of the Sovereign of a free People resting solely in the love and affection of his People. This Bill being more apt to alienate the minds of the subjects from the King, and in their opinion, involve him in the bad conduct of his Ministers, than to secure his Person and Government. That they apprehend the Bill said to be " to prevent Seditious Assemblies," is chiefly meant to preserve the present Ministry in their places, by shutting the mouths of an injured People, and preventing their just complaints against the men who have involved the nation in this most ruinous and impolitic war, which has already produced the annihilation of our trade, commerce, and manufactures, and reduced the country to poverty and famine.

The Meeting express their warmest acknowledgments to the Honourable Charles James Fox, the Honourable Thomas Erskine, Richard B. Sheridan, Esq. and all the other independent Gentlemen, who have so nobly supported the just rights and liberties of their country.

They appoint a Committee to draw out a Petition to the Honourable House of Commons, and that the same be presented by Richard B. Sheridan, Esq. The Petition being produced and read, it was unanimously approved of, signed by the Chairman, and immediately afterwards by a vast majority of the inhabitants, and it was ordered to lie on the table for future signatures.

Upon the Chairman leaving his seat, the Meeting unanimously voted him their Thanks for calling the Meeting, and for his impartial conduct in the Chair. They further appoint these Resolutions to be printed in the Morning Chronicle, the Sun, and the Dumfries Weekly Journal.

(Signed) ANDREW COWAN, Chairman.

N. B. The Chairman presumes it is customary for the Member of the Borough to present Petitions of this nature, but it is not more strange than a notorious fact, that the Inhabitants of the Borough, nor even the five Electors, never saw their Representative, scarcely know his name, and never heard of his address; they hope, on that account, an impartial public will forgive them for departing from the general custom. The Electors of the Borough of Wigton should consist of seventeen in number; only five of these live

live in the Borough or near it, the other twelve a neighbouring Lord finds it more convenient for his purpose, that they should consist of menial servants, dependants, and relations.

BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

MONDAY, DEC. 14.

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD presented several Petitions against the Bills for securing his Majesty's Person and Government, and for preventing Seditious Meetings.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE rose to move, that as important and complicated alterations had been made in the House of Commons on the Bill for the better securing his Majesty's Person, the Bill, with the alterations, should be printed, which was agreed to.

He then stated the absurdity of proceeding to discuss that Bill to-morrow, when the importance of the subject was such as to induce the House to have it printed with the alterations. If the discussion were to take place a day before the printing, in order to give room for due consideration, it would justly expose the House to ridicule, and to the charge of adopting measures which they had not sufficiently weighed. He therefore wished the Order of the Day for to-morrow to be postponed to Wednesday, to which, however, Lord Grenville and the Lord Chancellor would not agree.

The Bill for the better preventing Seditious Meetings being read a third time, Lord Grenville proposed, in compliance with the arguments of the Earl of Lauderdale on a former evening, that in the clause which relates to Scotland, the word "felonies" should be inserted in place of offences.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE did not think this alteration remedied the evil complained of, or was equivolent to the amendment he had proposed to make on a former night.

LORD THURLOW and LORD GRENVILLE said a few words, and the amendment was adopted.

Upon the Question being put that the Bill do pass,

THE DUKE OF BEDFORD rose and said, that as there was no farther hope of alteration in the Bill, or that it could yet be so modified as to be disarmed of the danger which it threatened to the Constitution and to our Liberties, no alternative remained but to oppose the passing of law, in which so much mischief was contained. It was indeed divested of some of the fatal and dangerous enactments, with which it was deformed in its first appearance, but the principle, which he would contend was a flagrant violation of the dearest privileges of the People, still remained. It was not asserted

aſſerted even by the Friends of the Bill, that it impoſed no re-ſtriction upon the privileges of the People, and upon this admiſſion he would not be afraid to argue the point, and to oppoſe the meaſure. But he would conſider what was the tendency, and the effect of theſe reſtrictions, and ſhew how fatal they were in their particular operation. He had not attended the Committee, becauſe he wiſhed the Bill to appear in its real nakedneſs and deformity. He would have regretted the alterations which had taken place, if the danger and diſſatisfaction its firſt form would have occaſioned had not been of too ſerious a nature, and threatened too fatal conſequences. But theſe alterations, however, had been extorted by the voice of the People, which he was proud in having contributed to excite. As to the neceſſity, on which the meaſure was juſtified, no evidence had been produced, no proof had been attempted to connect the unfortunate outrage on his Majeſty, which was the pretence of the whole, with the Societies, from which it was ſaid to originate. Were they to believe it on the aſſertion of Miniſters? He denied it, and called for proof. Miniſters, however, knew that they would not ſucceed in ſuch a proof, and they were averſe from the attempt. The examination would have deſtroyed all their plans, and unveiled their fabrications, otherwiſe they would have never refuſed to conſent to a proof which would have given ſuch reſpect to the meaſure to be founded on it, in the eyes of the public. It was impolitic likewiſe to ſend forth an Act, which was ſo liable to be abuſed. The power given to Magiſtrates was exceſſive and unreaſonable. Such an authority was not ſuited to the genius of Engliſhmen, who were not of a temper to bear oppreſſion and inſult with paſſive reſignation. He, as guardian of the Conſtitution, and of the Liberty of the People, could not truſt to any ſet of men a power which was ſo ſubject to abuſe: not even that perſon, Mr. Fox, whom he conſidered as the pureſt and moſt upright public character, were he at the helm of Government, he would not inveſt with any unconſtitutional power, though where he himſelf only was perſonally concerned there were no limits to his confidence. In acting for the public a different conduct was required, and it was not to be imagined that he would confer extraordinary powers on men whom he could not think deſerving of confidence. There were other parts of the Bill which were pointed againſt particular acts, of which no proof exiſted. Miniſters were not to be truſted becauſe it had been their practice to deceive. They had iſſued a Proclamation about the commencement of the war, ſtating facts, which were found to be untrue. The Habeas Corpus Act had been ſuſpended upon aſſertions which were afterwards diſproved. The

circumſtances

circumſtances which took place on the firſt day of the Seſſion, were likewiſe additional proofs of their perſeverence in deceit, and their diſpoſition to magnify any incident to the extent which ſuited their purpoſe, and to repreſent in the view they thought advantageous. The Bill was ſtated to be a meaſure of prevention. He reprobated, however, all laws which pretended to anticipate guilt. It was a deſpotic principle, pregnant with the moſt fatal miſchief. The Bill likewiſe tended to affect more immediately what was called the Lower Orders of Society. He wiſhed every law to be general, and equal in its application. He reminded the Houſe of the importance and the deſerts of that claſs of people, and how eſſential to the proſperity of a State. He ſaid, that it had been uſual to recur to the example of France; but the difference of character, ariſing from a difference of Government and difference of Inſtitutions, was ſo great as to defy all ſober compariſon. The People of France had been accuſtomed to ſevere oppreſſion; and the Revolution, which carried them out of their former ſyſtem and manners, was a bloody effort ariſing from diſpoſitions formed under depraved inſtitutions. The example of France was a ſolemn warning of the fatal conſequence of a Revolution prompted by ſevere oppreſſion. The People of this country had been quiet and ſubmiſſive under the accumulated preſſure of War and Scarcity. The War was ſaid to be in defence of Liberty, and that conſideration might reconcile them to its evils; but what would be their conſolation now, when that liberty was to be taken away. He then took notice of the calumnies which had been propagated with regard to the doctrines held on reſiſtance, held by a very diſtinguiſhed character in another place. As it firſt ſtood, he would not heſitate to ſay, that that reſiſtance would have been more a matter of prudence than of duty. It was the part of every man to lay open what he thought, and to ſtate arguments as ſtrongly as they deſerved. Theſe conſiderations, he was convinced, had been attended with effect. For his own part he was not afraid to avow the principles for which an anceſtor of his, Lord Ruſſel, had ſuffered, and he would maintain them at the ſame hazard. At a moment ſo critical as the preſent, it would have been wiſe in Miniſters to have conciliated the attachment of the People, inſtead of outraging their feelings and ſhaking their affection for the Conſtitution, by taking away the moſt valuable privileges which it ſecured.

The Duke of Leeds ſaid, there was a great diſtinction between the two Bills which were now in dependance. The one might be of uſe, the other could not. He had heard Miniſters complain of the pains taken to miſrepreſent the Bills, but he was certain

certain that the induſtry uſed to raiſe oppoſition to the Bills had deterred many who diſapproved them from teſtifying their diſlike, from a fear of inflaming the public mind to a dangerous degree. He did not expect that any attempt would ever have been made to weaken the right of petitioning; yet he was ſurpriſed to find that this right was allowed as to pending meaſures, which would afford ſo eaſy an opportunity of eluding the law. The taſk laid on Magiſtrates was more than they were equal to. The generality of the Bill would introduce the greateſt confuſion and danger in the application. He had been ſurpriſed to ſee the Committee obſtinate in refuſing all amendments. In its preſent ſtate the Bill ought not to paſs, and he would oppoſe it. He was convinced that it would not remove the evils it was meant to redreſs. It would induce people to divide into ſmall bodies, and elude the law by meeting below the number of fifty; and induce lectures to be given gratis. Inſtead of open attacks it would encourage ſecret undermining, and in the event prove detrimental to every branch of the Conſtitution; he would therefore vote againſt the Bill.

LORD HAWKESBURY ſaid, that the real principle of the Bill was, that it made a ſacrifice of a part for the ſafety of the whole; and upon this it was to be defended. At different periods of our hiſtory meaſures had been adopted as the emergency directed. Upon the ſame ground ſomething was to be done now, when the danger was ſo preſſing. The Societies which had ſo frequently and ſo numerouſly aſſembled, threatened miſchiefs which it was impoſſible to deny. Proof had been demanded of facts, to aſcertain the truth of which the formality of judicial evidence was not neceſſary.—A Meeting had taken place where violent and inflammatory diſcourſes had been held, and writings diſſeminated a few days before the outrage on his Majeſty had taken place, and yet the connection was denied. He then took a view of the proviſions in the Bill, and remarked the exceptions which had been allowed.—He ſaid, it was a deſirable circumſtance that no meetings ſhould be held where men of great property and weight did not attend, as it would ſecure that degree of conduct and wiſdom which popular Aſſemblies would not otherwiſe poſſeſs. He obſerved, that the Declaration of Rights itſelf limited the Right of Petitioning, as it confined it by the regulations exiſting at the time it was made. The Bill was to be argued as it now ſtood, not upon what it was, or upon any fanciful imperfections which might be imputed to it. He concluded with ſaying, that he was convinced that the Bill would have the effect intended, and that it was attended with the leaſt poſſible reſtraint upon the privileges of the people.

THE

THE EARL OF ABINGDON ſpoke ſtrongly againſt the Bill, and quoted Blackſtone's Commentaries with regard to the import of the Bill of Rights, and Hume's Eſſays in favour of the Liberty of the Preſs.

THE MARQUIS OF LANSDOWNE ſaid he attended to oppoſe the Bill on former occaſions, and now he appeared to give it his negative in this laſt ſtage of its progreſs. He would trouble the Houſe for the laſt time on the ſubject, with ſome obſervations upon the whole ſyſtem of the Bills. There were two points in which he would conſider the Bills, as conſtitutional meaſures, and as an expedient to remedy an evil. He had heard every argument employed againſt them which human ingenuity could ſupply. Such was the appre-henſion he himſelf entertained of them, that the exiſtence of the Conſtitution was implicated in their fate. He would not ſay any thing of reſiſtance, but this he would not heſitate to ſay, that if car-ried into execution in their utmoſt extent, it was high time for thoſe who prized civil liberty to conſider of *transferring themſelves and their property to ſome country of freedom from one that had once been free.* He would beg leave to ſay a few words upon the other Bill, in principle ſo connected with the preſent, which from the un-paralleled rapidity with which it was hurried through he had no op-portunity of doing. He thought the right of Juries infringed by it. In caſes of miſdemeanor, ſuch had been the practical injuſtice which had been put upon the law, that the Crown poſſeſſed the privilege of challenge while it was denied to the defendant. He then conſi-dered the import and effect of the other parts of the Bill. The re-ſtriction of duration to the King's life, he reprobated with the greateſt warmth. He could not conceive how ſuch a limitation could have found its way to it. The Act of Relaxation in Queen Anne's reign, as obſerved by Foſter, was a prudent meaſure, as it connected a diminution of penal ſeverity with the death of the Pre-tender. How Miniſters had contrived to put the King upon a foot-ing with the Pretender, and had made the period of his death a re-ſtoration of liberty to the State, he was utterly at a loſs to conjec-ture. It was a meaſure at once cruel as to the King, and unjuſt to the people. He then called the attention of the Houſe to a circum-ſtance, which, involved as it was in the ſyſtem of meaſures he ex-poſed, and as a conſtitutional point, was of the laſt importance. He had ſeen in a Newſpaper an Addreſs to his Majeſty from the Non-commiſſion Officers and Privates of a certain regiment. He knew the Colonel of the regiment to be a man of honour, and who would not encourage any proceeding he thought unconſtitutional. Yet this Addreſs had gone at large into reigning politics, thanked the King

King for an encreaſe of pay, building barracks, &c. In a conſtitutional view he thought this matter of the higheſt importance. The full cauſe of the diſaffection had not been properly conſidered, and the remedy was not accommodated to the ſource from which the evil aroſe. It aroſe from the famine in which the war had involved the country, which laſt originated with Miniſters; and the meetings ſo reprobated owed their weight to the diſcontent which the calamitous ſtate of the country produced. It was a circular chain of dependent cauſes which began and ended with Miniſters. The ſyſtem of terror would not do to allay this ferment. It would only encreaſe the evil, and by encreaſing the effect afford the pretence for going on to encreaſe the application. He had received the following letter from a Gentleman of great fortune and character, and of the higheſt weight in the commercial world, which painted our ſituation in juſt and glowing colours.

" I love England ſincerely; it was, and may be ſtill the happieſt ſpot upon the Globe.

" I ſee that the Miniſter will make the Loan only of 16 millions.—Am I miſtaken in thinking that he wants twice that ſum?

" Sorry I am to find, that you are lending anew 1,400,000l. ſterling to the Emperor, for making him fight in his own, and only cauſe. Can it eſcape a true politician, that theſe amazing exportations of metals enrich Germany, and *actually diminiſh the property of every Engliſhman*. Your pound ſterling is even at the nominal exchange now, worth 12 per cent. leſs *through all Europe*, than what it was, and would be 17 per cent. leſs (that is, lower than ever it was during the American War) were it not for the high price of gold through Europe. Is it not taking away from every Engliſhman one-ſixth of his property? Is it not increaſing 17 per cent. every buſhel of corn, and any commodity you buy from abroad? Is it not charging your induſtry with the increaſed price of all your wants? Is it not partial Bankruptcy, or paying 17 ſhillings in the pound to all foreigners who have their fortunes in your Stocks? Numberleſs are the conſequences of War to our induſtrious Nation; but I am afraid famine is the only one ſo immediately felt, that it forces to a Peace. The French Republic is *loudly* acknowledged by Sweden, Denmark, and Pruſſia; tacitly by many others. The late ſucceſſes of the Imperial Army give a glimpſe of ſucceſs, and may afford a ſhort triumph to the Miniſter. I am afraid the Emperor is not well-adviſed enough to uſe his more favourable ſituation for getting a more honourable Peace. The numbers will *at laſt* get the ſuperiority, and approaching danger give *firm* ſtability to the new ſyſtem of the French Government. Their finances are very low; it is the Houſe of a Bankrupt, where they are ſelling the remainder of their furniture at very low prices; but is not an enemy the more dangerous by being poor and warlike, hardened to want, and deſirous of plunder? Provided they have iron, powder, and bread, and I apprehend, that of all theſe things they have at leaſt as much as you, they have above you, the advantage of poſſeſſing every thing in a certain manner in common, and of being able to put it in requiſition whenever it is wanted. I know

that

that giving bonds (hypotheques ſpeciales) for Aſſignats, is but an exchange of paper; but in a country who has *no other object* but to defend its exiſtence, where the taxes are payable in kind, they can even do without all money, and ſubſtitute any arbitrary ſign for comparing the value of things. In one word, the total annihilation of Aſſignats does not, in my opinion, decide your conteſt. If Miniſters expect it, it is but another of thoſe unhappy deluſions, the conſequence of judging new events by old maxims—Enough of War."

He would likewiſe ſtate to the Houſe a fact which had been communicated to him from the ſame quarter, from which the indolence and activity of Adminiſtration were very little to their advantage, contraſted with the vigilance and care of the French Government.

"680,000l. has been drawn on ſome French merchants, in a particular quarter of Europe, to pay which, ſilver in bars are on the road, and on the arrival will be converted into corn."

Thus the French Government muſt have *acted* in the beginning of October, for the purpoſe of providing their country with corn, whilſt we are only deliberating about the manner in which it ſhall be done in the middle of December. But another important remark occurs, namely, that whilſt our Miniſters are repreſenting France to be in ſo complete a ſtate of bankruptcy as to be without reſource, they have ſent ſo large a ſum in ſilver to one place only for the purchaſe of corn, excluſive of what they may have ſent to America and other parts of Europe.

The effort of individuals is totally inadequate to remedy the evil; it is from the powers and exertions of Government alone in procuring a large ſupply of foreign corn from whence the poor can form the ſlighteſt expectation of relief. Laſt year, when private merchants were competent to the occaſion, Government took it into their own hands; this year when they are not, Government declined it.

If ſuch was the true ſtate of matters, Miniſters would be obliged to employ ſome ſtrong and maſterly expedient to remedy the ſcarcity, inſtead of the humbug declarations and ridiculous plans they now brought forward. All theſe attempts, in ſhort, to prevent a free and liberal communication would only enforce men to combine more ſtrongly, and unite more cloſely to ſecure and defend the privilege. The hiſtory of Louis XIV. ought to convince Miniſters how impoſſible it was to defeat communication by force. That Monarch, with all his troops, was baffled by the perſeverance of the Proteſtants, who, in defiance of his threats, met together in ſuch numbers that his troops durſt not attack them. He had now ſtated his entire diſapprobation of the Bill, and diſcharged his duty; what-

whatever might be the event, he had the consolation of having contributed his efforts to resist their progress.

Lord Grenville said, that much of what had fallen from the Noble Marquis and the Noble Duke who began the debate, applied more to another Bill not then before their Lordships, and therefore it was unnecessary to follow them, although the Noble Marquis had talked of the unconstitutionality of the present measure, but had given no reason why that term should be applied to it. He owned he was not aware of the remarks made upon the striking of Juries, but as they had so little connection with the present question, and never having heard them before introduced into this discussion, it was not to be expected that he would dwell more upon them than many other of the Noble Lord's observations. He denied that there was any thing new in the principle, or the clauses of this Bill, nor any restraint that was not warranted by laws already in existence, though it contained some regulations that were necessary to meet the exigency of the present times. With regard to the correspondence of the Noble Marquis, he knew nothing of the anonymous letters they had heard read, but they contained not one argument or position that might not be fairly combated, and in all of them he differed entirely from the writer, particularly in his comparative statement of the French and English finances, and when he stated what was to be dreaded from a poor and warlike enemy, he would ask, if a rich and warlike enemy was not much more to be dreaded. It was stated, that while they had the command of iron, powder, and bread, their resources were sufficient for carrying on War, but the Noble Marquis had not told the House how they were to obtain those supplies; all was in common in that country, and under the power of requisition: he thanked God the case was very different in this country, and in all the statements that his Majesty's Ministers had made of the different resources of this country and France, he was certain they had underrated rather than overrated the superiority of this country. The Noble Lords had ascribed the dearness of provisions to the War, and stated that, erroneously, to be the sole cause of it. He differed widely likewise from the Noble Marquis on the invidious comparison he had drawn between the activity of the two Governments in getting provisions in times of scarcity. The case was, that France having no foreign commerce, could not have any importation of grain, but through the interference of Government, and he defied any man to say that the distresses of the War were so little felt in any country in Europe as in England. His own opinion was, that instead of the War being the cause of the distresses of the people, the continuation of the War, he believed, had tended

to diminiſh the ſcarcity attributed to it, and he knew that the country did not wiſh for a ceſſation of hoſtilities until a peace could be obtained on ſuitable and honourable terms. Another point argued by the Noble Lords he never could agree to; it was, that the preſſure of the war, as felt by the people, had raiſed the ſedition and diſcontent in the country, which theſe Bills were intended to prevent, becauſe it was notorious that ſeditious practices had been carried to a height before the war began. The repreſentations and deputations ſent thither at an early period, and the evidence that had appeared in courts of juſtice, eſtabliſhed what he had ſaid on that ſubject, and the avowal of the ſocieties ſtill to perſiſt in their former principles muſt be ſufficient proof that there ſtill exiſted the ſame degree of ſedition, except Noble Lords were determined to ſhut their eyes and ears againſt all ſorts of evidence. He contended that there were no ſevere or improper reſtraints in the Bill inconſiſtent with the rights of Engliſhmen, nor any new felony created, unleſs when wilful and forcible obſtruction was given to Magiſtrates in the exerciſe of their legal functions. In ſituations ſuch as Magiſtrates might be placed under this and other Bills now exiſting, it was abſolutely neceſſary that much muſt be left to their diſcretion; at the ſame time it ought to be remembered, that they were reſponſible for what they did, and liable to puniſhment when they acted wrong; and likewiſe that power was not to be granted in this caſe to perſons acting under the influence of Miniſters, but to the great body of the magiſtracy. He did not think it ſo unfair as ſome Noble Lords had ſtated, to argue that from the prevalence of French principles here the ſame fatal conſequences were to be dreaded, if they were not checked, that had taken place in France; and concluded by enlarging on the dreadful effects that followed the French Revolution, and the great endeavours to introduce the French principles into this country, and all thoſe connected directly with recent events, which had made it neceſſary for the Legiſlature to adopt ſtrong and efficacious meaſures, which they had done, at the ſame time proceeding with the greateſt caution in not encroaching upon the liberties of the people. He therefore would vote for the paſſing of the Bill.

THE EARL OF LAUDERDALE ſaid, that he had ſo often taken a ſhare in the debates upon thoſe Bills, and feeling himſelf indiſpoſed, he would detain the Houſe but for a very ſhort time. He was not ſurpriſed that there was a pauſe after the very able and argumentative ſpeech of his Noble Friend. However, he was glad, that it had produced ſome ſort of reply from the Noble Secretary of State. He had, as uſual, endeavoured to ſend them away with old arguments,

arguments which they had often heard before; but ſome of them being put rather in a novel way, he could not let them paſs unnoticed. The Noble Lords in Office juſtified thoſe Bills by what they called the grounds, cauſe, and neceſſity for them; and referring to Reports long ſince upon the Table, and the proceedings of the different meetings of ſocieties, they endeavoured to trace a connection between them and the late daring attack upon his Majeſty. If this was really ſo, and if thoſe were the grounds for this meaſure, why had they lain dormant ſo long, or how could they excuſe themſelves for the neglect they had been guilty of? One of thoſe Bills they brought forward as ſuited to the immediate preſſure of the moment, but now they give you another reaſon, which has exiſted for a conſiderable time back, and thus the very defence they make involves in it their own accuſation; though none of them brought forward any thing that they themſelves called legal proof, yet they contended that the connection between the ſocieties and the outrage againſt his Majeſty was, from the notoriety of the events, proved to their ſatisfaction. In this way, ſaid the Noble Lord, any thing may be proved that Noble Lords may wiſh to aſſert; for inſtance, they might undertake to prove that the firſt Miniſter of Finance in this country was a notorious Stockjobber, for, firſt he makes a loan, which ought to have been the beſt he could make for the country, and four days after he brings down a Meſſage from the Throne, the effect of which was a robbery from the public of one million ſterling, to put into the pockets of the proprietors of the Loan; and this ſort of coincidence, he thought, went fully as far to prove his aſſertion, as any thing the Noble Lords had adduced, to prove the connection they aſſerted between the ſocieties and the attack upon the King. It ſeemed rather new and ſtrange, that Members of the Cabinet ſhould declare in that Houſe their total ignorance of ſuch important Bills, in the ſtate that they offered them to the country, and the more ſo, when this Bill, whatever might be ſaid of its being brought in on the preſſure of the moment, had been ſeen in the hands of a Special Pleader three months before it was heard of in that Houſe; though he acknowledged that, after it paſſed, it was ſo vaguely and looſely worded, that nobody would ſuppoſe that any man of common ſenſe, far leſs any man converſant in the law, had ever ſeen it at all. He then pointed out different abſurdities and ambiguities in the Bill, which, it could not be ſuppoſed, would be eaſily underſtood by common men, when there exiſted ſuch a difference of opinion between the greateſt law authorities, and that upon points which may afterwards come before them in their political capacities. It had been ſaid, that the Bill only ap-

plied to a certain deſcription of meetings; but, in his opinion, all ſorts of meetings may ſtill aſſemble under the proviſions of the Bill, and while it has not the effect held out as the intention of it, it ſhews to the Houſe and to the People an inclination to ſhackle and reſtrain their liberties. They may ſtill meet to diſcuſs any impending law, during the ſitting of Parliament, and if Parliament is not met, they may meet upon the propriety of addreſſing the King to call Parliament together, and upon thoſe occaſions they can freely diſcuſs any political queſtion. He had heard it with great regret ſaid by the Noble Lord at the head of the Board of Trade, that nobody could wiſh the loweſt orders of the people to meet upon public queſtions, becauſe men of ſenſe could not be expected to be found amongſt them. Did he mean to ſay that ſenſe was always attached to property? For his part, he never had reaſon to think that good ſenſe and property were inſeparable, and this diſtinction between the orders of mankind was one of his greateſt objections to thoſe Bills, and ſuch doctrines in that Houſe looked more like an imitation of French proceedings than worthy of a Britiſh Houſe of Parliament. All Writers ſince the Revolution had agreed that the higher and lower orders of men, in this country, participate in an equality of rights and liberties, and he conceived any contrary aſſertion to be moſt unconſtitutional language. He alluded to the letter and information communicated by his Noble Friend, and gave great weight to the contents. The Noble Secretary of State felt ſore when his Noble Friend extolled the activity of the French Government in ſecuring a proper ſupply of grain when there was an appearance of ſcarcity; but this was not ſurpriſing, when it was obſerved that France had taken this ſtep in October, while we were now, from the neglect of Miniſters, only conſidering of the ſteps that we were to take, and amuſing the people with humbug ſchemes and reſolutions. However difficult it might be, for Miniſters to make a good Peace, he muſt remind them that it was owing to the ſituation into which their miſconduct had ſunk the country; for he perfectly agreed with the writer of that letter, that England was once a free, happy, and proſperous country, though, he was ſorry to add, ſhe was not ſo now. It had been ſaid on ſome of the moſt obnoxious clauſes of this Bill, that they were not to be executed by Miniſters, or perſons under their immediate influence. If this was the caſe, why was there no proviſion in the Bill for preventing the Weſtminſter Juſtices from acting, who are appointed by Miniſters under the Police Bill, and have a ſalary from the Crown? And more particularly ought not this exception to have been made, as Weſtminſter is the moſt likely place to exhibit

hibit ſcenes to which theſe Bills are intended to apply? He contended, in reply to Lord Grenville, that the war, and the conduct of it, had been the cauſe of the diſtreſſes of the poor and the ſcarcity; and notwithſtanding all they had ſaid about proofs, from the Reports and Votes of the Houſe, he muſt conſider Miniſters as the cauſe of the war. He agreed with a Noble Duke (Leeds) who had the other night condemned Miniſters for withdrawing our Miniſter from France at the time they did. He knew not how the Noble Lord could prove that a continuance of the war could tend to diminiſh the ſcarcity, except he was to ſtate the ſmall ſupply that accrue from captures as a ſet-off againſt the enormous waſte that had been profuſely laviſhed on the expedition againſt France. The Noble Lord had concluded his ſpeech by boaſting of the caution which Miniſters had obſerved in framing thoſe Bills, a claim to praiſe of which he had not the ſmalleſt right. The Bills had been completely altered in their different ſtages, and any merit they had in not being ſo obnoxious as Miniſters wiſhed them to be, aroſe from the oppoſition they had met with. At beſt they were moſt dangerous meaſures, and ſeemed only to be part of a ſyſtem of gradual encroachment upon the Conſtitution, which, if perſiſted in, would terminate in its deſtruction. It was with the greateſt ſincerity and ſatisfaction, therefore, that he gave it his hearty negative.

Lord Mulgrave ſpoke at conſiderable length in favour of the Bills; he avoided following the Noble Lords through their arguments, becauſe he conceived moſt of them either irrelevant to the queſtion before the Houſe, or an anticipation of a debate that might afterwards take place when the other Bill came before them. He defended the Bills as a neceſſary and ſalutary meaſure, called for by the circumſtances of the times, and the moſt likely to have the wiſhed-for effect; he would therefore vote for them.

Lord Thurlow ſaid, that when the Houſe conſidered the importance and magnitude of the Bill they were about to paſs, and when they reflected on the nature and tendency of it, it became them to be well grounded in the opinion that there did exiſt a danger or a neceſſity that juſtified ſo ſtrong a remedy. Having ſtated his opinion on the rights and liberty of the ſubject as ſet forth in the Bill of Rights, and eſtabliſhed by the Revolution, on a former night, he had only to repeat them now. He ſtated the undoubted right of the People to petition the King or either Houſe of Parliament upon any real or ſuppoſed grievance; and that was a liberty which, he truſted, would remain entire and unſhaken by any reſtraint whatever. On the other hand, if any exceſſes under the

ſanction

ſanction of liberty were attempted, the Government might meet with a grievance by ſtrong and ſuitable laws, but muſt take care not to go a ſtep farther than was abſolutely neceſſary. With regard to the Bill, it came to be conſidered whether it reſtrained any rights or liberties of the ſubject? To what extent they were reſtrained? And why that reſtraint was neceſſary? Why every Engliſhman ſhould be deprived of his right to diſcuſs public queſtions relative to Church and State? As to the firſt ſort of meetings, thoſe called by private individuals without any authority, their right was ſufficiently explained by the Bill of Rights, but he diſapproved much of the ambiguity of the clauſes of this Bill, which, if taken by any conſtruction that he could put upon the words, went directly to reſtrain that acknowledged right which the Bill ſeemed in other parts to recognize; this clauſe forbid all diſcuſſion of ſubjects tending to create hatred or contempt, not merely againſt the King's Perſon, but his Government. Now, how is it poſſible that a meeting can be held to complain of grievances in the Government, or on matters relative to Church and State, without falling within the penalties of this Act? For all complaints and idea of grievances muſt produce a certain degree of odium or contempt, and often both, which he conſidered, if taken in its full extent, as if the Bill went at once to prohibit all ſuch meetings, becauſe from their nature, though the right to meet was acknowledged, it was impoſſible for them to do any buſineſs without coming within the ſcope of the Bill. With regard to the other meetings, called by Juſtices of Peace, Mayors, &c. it had been ſaid, that when the Magiſtrate acted wrong, he was liable to be puniſhed; but this had not been explained to his ſatisfaction; he could eaſily foreſee many inſtances in which the Magiſtrate might be led into error, or act wrongfully; but having done ſo, he knew of no certain way of puniſhing him.

He ſeverely reprobated the clauſe which makes it felony if the Meeting do not diſperſe, and death if twelve of them remain together for one hour after they are ordered to diſperſe: there is no proviſion in the clauſe which ſays that; before they are liable to this puniſhment, it muſt be proved that they remained in a diſorderly manner; for they were liable, even if they did or ſaid nothing, but merely kept together in the ſame place: this was very different from the Riot Act; it was there neceſſary that they ſhould remain in a riotous, tumultuous manner, after being ordered to diſperſe; but if they were harmleſs and quiet, nothing could be done to them merely for continuing together. He went over the remainder of the clauſes, commenting upon the want of clearneſs, vague wording, and ambiguity of the whole, which were his reaſons

ſons for giving it the oppoſition he had done; and, after all the attention that he had paid to the very ample and able manner in which the Bill had been debated, as well as every information he could receive, he had heard of no facts or circumſtances, nor was there any thing contained in the Reports on the table, that warranted the Houſe in paſſing a law which involved the whole maſs of the people in a reſtraint upon their undoubted rights and liberty; and therefore he muſt give it his decided negative.

The Lord Chancellor roſe, and entered into an elaborate hiſtory of the evils that had ariſen to Europe from the French Revolution, and ſtated all the horrors and deſtruction which had fallen upon that country, in conſequence of the prevalence of Jacobin principles, which, if they had not been checked in time, would ſoon have produced the ſame fatal conſequences in all neighbouring nations. He defended the Bill upon every principle of policy, ſafety, and neceſſity, and obſerved, that the objections made againſt it that night, particularly by the Noble and Learned Lord, were merely verbal, and would have been much better timed in the Committee upon the Bill.

Lord Thurlow ſaid, that in the Committee he had ſuggeſted the objections, but the reception they had met with did not encourage him to hope that any good could be derived from the objections of a perſon ſo unauthentic in that Houſe as himſelf. The little countenance to objections which had been given by the authors of the Bill, even when they were reduced to the neceſſity of acknowledging that the Bill was drawn with very little accuracy, and that many of its clauſes were obſcure and imperfect, did not certainly encourage him to make all the obſervations which he ſhould have done. If a fair deſire to correct the inaccuracies of the Bill had been manifeſted on the part of its authors, he ſhould have pointed out another moſt remarkable, and, in his mind, moſt blameable inaccuracy. A popular informer was permitted to bring his action of debt for any of the penalties, but he was not directed to ſet forth, in his declaration, the ſpecific offence for which he brought his action: there were ſeventeen offences in the Bill, and thus, by not obliging the proſecutor to ſpecify the particular one, a defendant might be brought to his trial without knowing the particular fact. But, as he ſaid, when he ſaw ſo little diſpoſition to give clearneſs and intelligibility to the Bill, he thought it vain idly to detain their Lordſhips with obſervations which were to produce no benefit to the public.

The Lord Chancellor ſaid, that it ſurely muſt be the deſire of the Houſe that the Bill ſhould be clear, and the definitions ſpecific.

cific. He lamented that the Noble and Learned Lord ſhould think that there was any want of a diſpoſition to entertain obſervations which came from ſo grave an authority as himſelf; but the Noble and Learned Lord muſt be ſenſible that, in regard to the definition of what might and what might not be offences under the Act, it would be obviouſly impolitic and unwiſe to define them with ſuch ſtrictneſs as ſhould inſtruct certain characters to what preciſe length they might go in their attacks on the Conſtitution. In regard to the obſervation now made by the Noble and Learned Lord, he ſhould content himſelf with ſaying, that he certainly did not think himſelf reſponſible for all the clauſes of all the Bills that came into that Houſe; but in the preſent inſtance he did not think the objection well founded; he thought the proſecutor ought to ſet forth in his declaration the preciſe offence for which he purſued.

The Earl of Lauderdale confirmed the ſtrong obſervation of his Noble and Learned Friend, that no diſpoſition had been ſhewn to receive with favour any amendments of the crude and indigeſted clauſes of the Bill; and even when Miniſters were forced to own the moſt dangerous inaccuracies, they did it with a very ill grace. He wiſhed, however, that they were even yet to recommit it, for then he would be bold to ſay, that the Noble and Learned Lord on the Woolſack, however he might affect to treat obſervations with ſcorn, would, in his uſual way, be brought to correct his firſt aſſertions, and take the benefit of the wiſdom he at firſt affected to deride. What particularly induced him to riſe, however, was the laſt obſervation of the Noble and Learned Lord on the Woolſack, an obſervation which ſtruck him with horror. The Noble and Learned Lord had ſaid, that it would not be prudent nor political to define clearly the fences of the Bill, leaſt the people might thereby underſtand what they might and what they might not do. "Good God! exclaimed the Noble Earl, did I rightly hear, did I clearly underſtand the Noble and Learned Lord? Is it poſſible that a ſentiment ſo outrageous to the eternal principles of juſtice, could come from the mouth of a Britiſh Chancellor from the Woolſack in a Britiſh Houſe of Lords? What! that the law was purpoſely to be made obſcure, that proviſions were to be ſtudiouſly left indiſtinct, for fear that the people might be taught how to live ſecurely, and how to avoid incurring the penalties of the ſtatutes? Was he right in ſaying, that this dreadful ſentiment came from a Britiſh Chancellor, or were they not in a French Aſſembly, and did they not come from the mouth of a Robeſpierre?"

The

The Lord Chancellor quitted the Woolſack, and with great vehemence replied that the Noble Earl's manner of debating in that Houſe would juſtify his taking no notice of the laſt obſervation, but he thought it juſt neceſſary to ſay that he had, in reply to a grave and weighty authority, only obſerved that there might be inſtances when prudence and policy required that definitions of offences ſhould not be made with ſuch minute accuracy as to inſtruct perſons how to offend with impunity.

The Earl of Lauderdale.—"The Noble and Learned Lord's own explanation of his words juſtifies the accuſation I have brought againſt him."

The Earl of Darnley lamented that ſo ſevere a Bill ſhould be made for ſo long a period. It was his anxious wiſh to have it ſhortened; but thinking ſome Bill neceſſary, he had no alternative but to vote for the preſent.

The Earl of Abingdon read the King's Coronation Oath, to ſhew, he ſaid, that this Bill was a violation of it.

The Houſe then divided,

Contents 57. Not Contents, 14.

LIST OF THE MINORITY.

Duke of Norfolk	Earl of Suffolk	PROXIES
Duke of Bedford	Earl of Abingdon	Duke of Grafton
Duke of Leeds	Lord Thurlow	Earl of Guildford
Marquis of Lanſdowne	Lord Chedworth	Earl of Thanet
Earl of Derby	Lord St. John	Lord Teynham.
Earl of Lauderdale	Lord Say and Sele	
Earl of Albemarle	Lord Ponſonby	

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15.

Their Lordſhips read the Bills on the Table; and Lord Grenville's Bill, returned from the Commons, with amendments, not being printed. Adjourned till to-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

A MESSAGE was received from the Houſe of Lords, ſtating that their Lordſhips had agreed to ſeveral Bills without amendment, and to the Bill for more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings, with certain amendments.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer moved that the amendments made by the Houſe of Lords on the Bill for preventing Seditious Meetings ſhould be read.

Mr. Fox was of opinion that the amendments were of a nature that could not be acquieſced in by the Houſe. It was an eſtabliſhed principle that every alteration on a Bill which went to lay pecuniary burdens on the people was rejected. This was done on the pre-

ſent

ſent occaſion, for an amendment had taken place, by which, in Scotland, as in England, the puniſhment of an offence was 50l. though in the legal conſtruction of the Bill, death and confiſcation of moveables had appeared to be fixed as the puniſhment of Scotland.—Fine therefore being impoſed by the amendment of the Houſe of Lords, laid a pecuniary burden on the people, was an encroachment on the eſtabliſhed forms of the Houſe, and ought not to be acquieſced in.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER agreed in the general principle, but contended that the Houſe of Lords had only more clearly defined what really was the intention of the Houſe; no objection in point of order lay to the amendment. He ſhewed from the Bill, that the meaning of the Houſe had not been to make the puniſhment of the offence death and confiſcation in Scotland; but that really the fine had been intended to apply equally in that country.

MR. FOX ſtill maintained that the queſtion was not as to the intention of individual members, but as to the legal meaning of the Bill. As the legal meaning had been thought to inflict the puniſhment of death and confiſcation, and that being converted into a fine was impoſing a pecuniary burden, which the Act of the Houſe in its legal meaning had not done, he therefore could not acquieſce in the amendment.

After ſome farther obſervations from Mr. Dundas, in ſupport of what had been ſaid by the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

THE SPEAKER mentioned a precedent in the year 1781, where a ſpecial entry had been made in the Journals of the reaſons which induced the Houſe to concur in an amendment, which ſeemed to infringe the general principle. He thought that ſomething ſimilar ſhould be done on the preſent occaſion to prevent any future miſconception of their conduct, in accepting this amendment, which after the amendments had been agreed to, was ordered to be done.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

AT a General Meeting of the SOCIETY for CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION, held the 14th day of December, 1795,

Reſolved unanimouſly,

I. That it appears to this Society that the two Bills now pending in Parliament are incompatible with the principles of a free Conſtitution, and if paſſed into laws, will give a mortal ſtab to the liberties of the Britiſh nation.

II. That there never was an occaſion when the Royal Prerogative could be better exerted, than to prevent theſe Bills from paſſing into laws.

III. That whether that Prerogative be ſo exerted or not, the people ought to petition the King to diſſolve the Parliament.

IV. That

IV. That the facility with which these Bills have passed thro' the House of Commons contrary to the opinion of the nation, is an additional proof of the absolute necessity of a Parliamentary Reform.

V. That the conduct of Opposition in the two Houses of Parliament, with respect to these Bills, both in and out of Parliament, entitles them to the gratitude of the country.

VI. That the Whig Club, the Society of the Friends of the People, and the London Corresponding Society have merited the thanks of their country.

VII. Resolved, That these Resolutions be signed by the Chairman and published.

VIII. Resolved, That the Meeting do adjourn to Friday evening, the 18th inst. at 7 o'clock. J. CHATFIELD in the Chair.

MERCHANTS-HALL, EDINBURGH.

AT a numerous and respectable Meeting of the Inhabitants of the City of EDINBURGH and Neighbourhood, held at Merchants-Hall, on Monday, the 30th Nov. 1795, for the purpose of considering two Bills now pending in Parliament, entituled, " A Bill for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government;" and " A Bill for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies;

ROBERT YOUNG, Esq. Merchant and Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Edinburgh, having been called to the Chair, and VANS HATHORN, Esq. W. S. being chosen Clerk,

The following Resolutions were moved by Sir Alexander M'Kenzie, of Coul, Bart. seconded by Mr. Thos. Chalmers, Smith.

I. That although we have beheld with concern and astonishment the unremitting efforts of certain seditious persons and meetings, to overturn the Constitution of this country, we should not have obtruded ourselves on the Legislature, but have relied on its wisdom, to take the proper measures for securing his Majesty's person and the Constitution, in this alarming crisis, if we had not observed that certain persons, inhabitants of this City, have already expressed their opinion to Parliament against the two Bills now pending for the above salutary purposes.

II. That we therefore feel it necessary to express our opinions on the subject, lest by our silence it should be supposed that all, or a majority of the Inhabitants of this City, agreed in sentiment with the persons who have already hazarded their opinion upon the subject.

III. That we are most decidedly of opinion, that some additional laws are necessary at the present moment, to repress the spirit of disaffection and sedition, which has of late years shewn itself, in shapes and forms unknown to our ancestors, and for which, therefore, it is not surprising, that the existing laws do not provide an adequate remedy.

IV. That we have considered the above two Bills now pending in Parliament, and are humbly of opinion, that Petitions should forthwith be presented to both Houses of Parliament, praying, that the above, or such other Bills as their wisdom shall devise, for protecting his Majesty's Person, and suppressing seditious Meetings, may be passed into laws for a limited time.

A Petition having been presented and read,

V. Resolved, that the same be adopted as the sense of this Meeting, signed by all present, and left in this Hall, for the signature of other loyal and constitutional Inhabitants.

VI. That

VI. That several copies of the Petition, besides the one for signature, do lie on the table at this place, in order that all persons may have an opportunity of reading and considering it.

VII. That it be desired that all persons subscribing add their designations.

VIII. That a copy of the Petition be transmitted to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and he requested to present the same to the House of Peers.

IX. That a Copy of the Petition be transmitted to the Member of the City of Edinburgh, and he requested to present the same to the House of Commons.

X. That the following Gentlemen be a Committee to superintend the subscription of the Petition, and carry these Resolutions into execution.

Mr. YOUNG, the Chairman.

Sir Alexander M'Kenzie, of Coul, Bart. Alexander Wallace, Esq. Banker. Mr. Thomas Hutchinson, Merchant. Colonel Dirom, of Mountannan. John Hay, Esq. of Hayston, Banker. Lieut. Col. Alexander Penrose Cumin Gordon, of Altire and Gordonstone. Thomas Elder, Esq. of Forneth, Merchant. John Wauchope, Esq. Writer to the Signet. Sir John Inglis, of Crammond, Bart. Dr. James Gregory, Physician. Adam Rolland, Esq. of Gask, Advocate. Charles Hope, Esq. Advocate. George Paterson, Esq. of Castlehuntly. Archibald Campbell, Esq. of Clathick, Advocate. Mr. Macduff Hart, Shoemaker. Mr. William Sibbald, Merchant. Bain Whyt, Esq. W. S. Mr. Thomas Armstrong, Coppersmith. William Anderson, W. S. Mr. Archibald Campbell, Brewer. Lieut. Col. John Murray, of Naplerusky. Capt. Patrick Hunter, Queen-street; and Mr. George Montgomery, Confectioner. Mr. Thomas Chalmers, Smith.

Resolved, That these Resolutions be printed in all the Edinburgh Newspapers, and in such of the London Newspapers as the Committee shall appoint.

The Thanks of the Meeting were then unanimously voted to the Chairman, for his able and respectable conduct in the Chair.

(Signed) ROBERT YOUNG, Chairman.
VANS HATHORNE, Clerk.

EAST INDIA HOUSE, *Dec.* 16.

A QUARTERLY General Court, which was made special, at the request of nine Proprietors, was held at the India House.

MR. RANDLE JACKSON proposed an Address to his Majesty.

MR. KNOX seconded the motion.

MR. JONES ADAIR spoke warmly in support of the motion.

MR. BOYD approved of the Address, but did not think it contained all that might have been said; it should have urged his Majesty to take measures for preventing such atrocities in future.

MR. FITZGERALD thought there was not any occasion for new matter.

MR. MONTGOMERY CAMPBELL agreed with Mr. Boyd, that something relative to the Bills was wanting to render the Address complete.

THE CHAIRMAN wished to avoid any amendment which might tend to render the Address not unanimous.

MR. JONES ADAIR reprobated the idea of blending the subjects as highly disorderly—the Address *did* go far enough—it went to the *hearts* of the Proprietors.

Mr.

Mr. Randle Jackson wiſhed to know how the ſafety of his Majeſty's Perſon would be better provided for by irritable meaſures; ſo long as the wiſe ſyſtem prevailed, that the King politically can do no wrong, why involve his Majeſty in broils, which the very Conſtitution diſclaims?

The Addreſs was then put, and paſſed unanimouſly.

On the motion of Mr. Jackson, it was alſo reſolved unanimouſly, That the Court of Directors do preſent this mark of loyalty and attachment from the Eaſt India Company to the King.

Mr. Twining moved, "That the Thanks of the Court be given to Mr. Randle Jackſon for having drawn up the ſame;" which paſſed unanimouſly.

Mr. M. Campbell deſired that the Addreſs to the Houſe of Commons from the Directors might be read, and moved, "That this Court do approve the ſentiments it contains."

Mr. Serjeant Clayton ſpoke in favour of the motion.

The Chairman expreſſed his ſatisfaction that the buſineſs was in proper train; the mode adopted was merely that of agreeing with the conduct of the Executive Body.

Mr. Henchman lamented that the Directors had ever thought of going to Parliament without firſt conſulting their Conſtituents.

Mr. Alderman Pickett ſaid, this was a queſtion of politics, and took from the original motion its dignity and conſequence.

Mr. Princep read, as part of his ſpeech, the declaration of the Merchants and Bankers againſt the Bills, which perfectly accorded with his own ideas.

Mr. Jackson oppoſed the motion, on the ground of the ill effect which had ever reſulted from the India Company interfering with politics.

Sir John Day reprobated the acts of thoſe who oppoſed the Sedition Bills.

Mr. Law, having always reprobated the Bills, ſhould give the motion his decided negative.

The queſtion was then put and paſſed, with three hands againſt it.

Mr. Knox moved the Thanks of the Court to the Directors for having petitioned the Commons; which being ſeconded by Mr. Jackson Barwis, was, after a deſultory converſation, in the courſe of which it was withdrawn by the mover, at length carried in the affirmative.

TO THE FACULTY OF ADVOCATES.

Gentlemen, *Edinburgh, Dec. 5, 1795.*

I have received, and there has been printed and circulated amongſt you, another letter from the eight Members of the Faculty, whoſe former letter, with my anſwer, are already before you. They have deſired that the correſpondence between us ſhould end, and have effectually ſecured this wiſh, by writing to me in a tone and language to which my ſenſe of what becomes me will not permit me to reply.

It is to you, therefore, Gentlemen, to your juſtice and liberality alone, that I ſhall now addreſs myſelf; leaving it to you to judge of the propriety of their oppoſition, and of their right, when addreſſing you, to reſt the ſafety of the Conſtitution, and the exiſtence of the State, on the political views of the Adminiſtration to which they are attached; and not only to brand me with a deſign to overturn the laws, but to implicate in the charge the many

diſtinguiſhed

diftinguifhed characters, and indeed the great body of the nation, who have oppofed the Bills in queftion as a dangerous and unneceffary innovation on the exifting laws, and deftructive of our eftablifhed Government and Conftitution.

If, under this conviction, to have ufed my conftitutional right to petition the Legiflature; if to have joined in this meafure with thoufands of my countrymen, of every rank and defcription; if to have been unable to fee, or yet to comprehend, the diftinction attempted to be made between perfons in my own fituation, and what thefe Gentlemen are pleafed to term the ignorant and giddy multitude, as to the rights which the Great Charter of the Britifh Conftitution beftows on all without diftinction; if to have concurred with fome of the moft refpectable of the Petitioners here, in occafionally attending to fee the fignatures of the great numbers who repaired to the place appointed for fubfcribing, fairly taken down; if, though well entitled to have ftated to all of them my opinion of thofe Bills, I left them to learn it from the Petitions themfelves; if, anxious to avoid any agitation in their minds beyond what their own feeling of the object might occafion, I, towards the clofe of the fubfcription * (the only time I ever addreffed them,) commended their quiet and orderly behaviour, exhorted them to perfevere in the fame peaceable deportment, and thereby to give no perfon a pretence for throwing blame on the Conftitutional Act they had then performed; in fhort, if a confcientious feeling of what I conceive to be right; if a manly and independent declaration of my fentiments, without regard to perfonal confideration, fhall meet with your difapprobation; and, if an unabated regard for the intereft and privileges of the Faculty, and a grateful fenfe of the honour you have for ten fucceffive years conferred upon me, fhall prove infufficient to preferve your efteem, I muft fubmit to lofe it; but I thank God, confcious of having done my duty, I fhall preferve my own: I know I fhall retain that of many worthy members of our body; and, I truft, for the increafed regard of the public, to that candour, liberality, and generofity, to that abhorrence of all perfecution for opinions, which are the nobleft features of the Britifh character; and the certain deftruction of which will, in my mind, be one of the dreadful confequences of the Bills I oppofe.

I have the honour to be, with the utmoft gratitude and refpect,

Gentlemen, Your moft obedient and faithful fervant,

HENRY ERSKINE.

At the clofe of the Election, the numbers were,

For the Lord Advocate	123
Hon. Henry Erfkine	38
Majority	85

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THURSDAY, DEC. 17.

A Meffage from the Lords informed the Houfe that their Lordfhips had agreed to the amendments of the Commons in the Bill for the Safety and Prefervation of his Majefty's Perfon and Government.

* The period here alluded to was after the date of the letter from the eight Gentlemen to the Faculty, and of both their letters to the Dean.

COPY OF THE TWO BILLS, AS THEY RECEIVED THE ROYAL ASSENT.

An ACT for the Safety and Preservation of his Majesty's Person and Government against Treasonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts.

[18th *December*, 1795.]

WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, of Great Britain, in this present Parliament assembled, duly considering the daring outrages offered to your Majesty's most sacred Person, in your passage to and from your Parliament at the opening of this present Session, and also the continued attempts of wicked and evil-disposed persons to disturb the tranquillity of this your Majesty's kingdom, particularly by the multitude of seditious pamphlets and speeches daily printed, published, and dispersed, with unremitting industry, and with a transcendent boldness, in contempt of your Majesty's Royal Person and dignity, and tending to the overthrow of the Laws, Government, and happy Constitution of these realms, have judged that it is become necessary to provide a further remedy against all such treasonable and seditious practices and attempts: We, therefore, calling to mind the good and wholesome provisions which have at different times been made by the wisdom of Parliament for averting such dangers, and more especially for the security and preservation of the persons of the Sovereigns of these realms, do most humbly beseech your Majesty that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That if any person or persons whatsoever, after the day of the passing of this Act, during the natural life of our most gracious Sovereign Lord the King, (whom Almighty God preserve and bless with a long and prosperous reign), and until the end of the next Session of Parliament after a demise of the Crown, shall, within the realm or without, compass, imagine, invent, devise, or intend death or destruction, or any bodily harm tending to death or destruction, maim or wounding, imprisonment or restraint, of the person of the same our Sovereign Lord the King, his heirs and successors, or to deprive or depose him or them from the stile, honour, or kingly name, of the Imperial Crown of this realm, or of any other of his Majesty's dominions or countries; or to levy war against his Majesty, his heirs and successors, within this realm, in order, by force or constraint, to compel him or them to change his or their measures or counsels, or in order to put any force or constraint upon, or to intimidate, or overawe, both Houses, or either House of Parliament; or to move or stir any foreigner or stranger with force to invade this realm, or any other his Majesty's dominions or countries, under the obeysance of his Majesty, his heirs and successors; and such compassings, imaginations, inventions, devices, or intentions, or any of them, shall express, utter, or declare, by publishing any printing or writing, or by any overt-act or deed; being legally convicted thereof, upon the oaths of two lawful and credible witnesses, upon trial, or otherwise convicted or attainted by due course of law, then every such person and persons, so as aforesaid offending, shall be deemed, declared, and adjudged to be a traitor and traitors, and shall suffer pains of death, and also lose and forfeit as in cases of high treason.

II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person or persons within that part of Great Britain called England, at any time from and after the day of the passing of this Act, during three years from the day of passing this Act, and until the end of the then next Session of Parliament, shall maliciously and advisedly, by writing, printing, preaching, or other speaking, express, publish, utter, or declare, any words or sentences to incite or stir up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors,

cessors, or the Government and Constitution of this realm, as by law established, then every such person and persons, being thereof legally convicted, shall be liable to such punishment as may by law be inflicted in cases of high misdemeanors; and if any person or persons shall, after being so convicted, offend a second time, and be thereupon convicted, before any Commission of Oyer and Terminer, or Gaol Delivery, or in his Majesty's Court of King's Bench, such person or persons may, on such second conviction, be adjudged, at the discretion of the Court, either to suffer such punishment as may now by law be inflicted in cases of high misdemeanors, or to be banished this realm, or to be transported to such place, as shall be appointed by his Majesty for the transportation of offenders; which banishment or transportation shall be for such term as the Court may appoint, not exceeding seven years.

III. And be it further enacted, That if any offender or offenders, who shall be so ordered by any such Court as aforesaid to be banished the realm, or transported beyond the seas, in manner aforesaid, shall be afterwards at large within any part of the kingdom of Great Britain, without some lawful cause, before the expiration of the term for which such offender or offenders shall have been ordered to be banished or transported beyond the seas as aforesaid, every such offender being so at large as aforesaid, being thereof lawfully convicted, shall suffer death, as in cases of felony without benefit of Clergy; and such offender or offenders may be tried, either before Justices of Assize, Oyer and Terminer, Great Sessions, or Goal Delivery, for the county, city, liberty, borough, or place, where such offender or offenders shall be apprehended and taken, or from whence he, she, or they, was or were ordered to be banished or transported; and the Clerk of Assize, Clerk of the Peace, or other Clerk or Officer of the Court, having the custody of the Records where such orders of banishment or transportation shall be made, shall, at the request of the prosecutor, or any other person on his Majesty's behalf, make out and give a certificate, in writing, signed by him, containing the effect and substance only (omitting the formal part) of every indictment and conviction of such offender or offenders, and of the order for his, her, or their banishment and transportation, to the Justices of Assize, Oyer and Terminer, Great Sessions, or Gaol Delivery, where such offender or offenders shall be indicted (not taking for the same more than two shillings and sixpence); which certificate shall be sufficient proof of the conviction and order for banishment or transportation of such offender or offenders.

IV. Provided always, that no person or persons, by virtue of this present Act, shall for any misdemeanor incur any the penalties herein before mentioned, unless he, she, or they, be prosecuted within six calendar months next after the offence committed, and the prosecution brought to trial or judgment within the first Term, Sittings, Assizes, or Sessions, in which, by the course of the Court wherein such prosecution shall be depending, the prosecutor could bring on such trial, or cause such judgment to be entered, or in the Term, Sittings, Assizes, or Session, which shall next ensue, unless the Court in which such prosecution shall be depending, or before which such trial ought to be had, shall, on special ground stated by motion in open Court, think fit to enlarge the time for the trial thereof, or unless the defendant shall be prosecuted to or towards an outlawry; and that no person shall, upon trial, be convicted by virtue of this Act, for any misdemeanor, but by the oaths of two credible witnesses.

V. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That all and every person or persons that shall at any time be accused, or indicted, or prosecuted, for any offence made or declared to be Treason by this Act, shall be entitled to the benefit of the Act of Parliament, made in the seventh year of his late Majesty King William the Third, intituled, "An Act for regulating of Trials in cases of Treason and Misprision of Treason;" and also to the provisions made by another Act of Parliament, passed in the seventh year of her late Majesty Queen Anne, intitutled, "An Act for improving the Union of the two Kingdoms."

VI. Provided also, and be it enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent or affect any prosecution by information or indictment at the Common Law, for any offence within the provisions of this Act, unless the party shall have been first prosecuted under this Act.

 An

An ACT for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies.

[18*th December*, 1795.]

WHEREAS assemblies of divers persons, collected for the purpose or under the pretext of deliberating on public grievances, and of agreeing on petitions, complaints, remonstrances, declarations, or other addresses, to the King, or to both Houses, or either House of Parliament, have of late been made use of to serve the ends of factious and seditious persons, to the great danger of the public peace, and may become the means of producing confusion and calamities in the nation: Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That no meeting, of any description of persons, exceeding the number of fifty persons, (other than and except any meeting of any county, riding, or division, called by the Lord Lieutenant, Custos Rotulorum, or Sheriff, of such county; or a meeting called by the Convener of any county or stewartry in that part of Great Britain called Scotland; or any meeting called by two or more Justices of the Peace of the county or place where such meeting shall be holden; or any meeting of any county, having different ridings or divisions, called by any two Justices of any one or more of such ridings or divisions; or any meeting called by the major part of the Grand Jury of the county, or of the division of the county, where such meeting shall be holden, at their general Assizes or general Quarter Sessions of the Peace; or any meeting of any city, or borough, or town corporate, called by the Mayor, or other Head Officer of such city, or borough, or town corporate; or any meeting of any ward or division of any city or town corporate, called by the Alderman or other Head Officer of such ward or division; or any meeting or any corporate body), shall be holden, for the purpose or on the pretext of considering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, or declaration, or other address, to the King, or to both Houses, or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in Church or State, or for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating upon any grievance in Church or State, unless notice of the intention to hold such meeting, and of the time and place when and where the same shall be proposed to be holden, and of the purpose for which the same shall be proposed to be holden, shall be given, in the names of seven persons at the least, being householders resident within the county, city, or place where such meeting shall be proposed to be holden, whose places of abode and descriptions shall be inserted in such notice, and which notice shall be given by public advertisement in some public newspaper usually circulated in the county and division where such meeting shall be holden five days at the least before such meeting shall be holden, or shall be delivered in manner herein-after mentioned; and that such notice shall not be inserted in any such newspaper unless the authority to insert such notice shall be signed by seven persons at the least, being householders resident within the county, city, or place where such meeting shall be proposed to be holden, and named in such notice; and unless such authority, so signed, shall be written at the foot of a true copy of such notice, and shall be delivered to the person required to insert the same in any such newspaper as aforesaid; which person shall cause such notice and authority to be carefully preserved, and shall also, at any time after such notice shall have been inserted in such paper, and within fourteen days after the day on which such meeting shall be had, produce such notice and authority, and cause a true copy thereof (if required) to be delivered to any Justice of the Peace for the county, city, town, or place, where such person shall reside, or where such newspaper shall be printed, and who shall require the same; and in case any person shall insert any such notice in any newspaper, without such authority as aforesaid, or in case any person to whom any such notice and authority shall have been delivered for the purpose of inserting such notice in any such newspaper as aforesaid, shall refuse to produce such notice and authority, or to deliver a true copy thereof, being thereunto required as aforesaid, within three days after such production and copy, or either of them, shall have been so required, every such person, for every such offence, shall forfeit the sum of Fifty Pounds to any person who shall sue for the same.

II. Provided

II. Provided always, nevertheless, and be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be lawful to deliver any such notice as aforesaid, signed by the seven persons in whose names such notice shall be given, with their places of abode, and descriptions, five days at the least before the day on which such meeting shall be holden, to the Clerk of the Peace of the county, riding, or division, within which such meeting shall be proposed to be holden; and such Clerk of the Peace shall forthwith, and without delay, send a true copy of such notice, with such signatures and additions as aforesaid, to three Justices of the Peace at the least, of such county, riding, or division, then resident within such county, riding, or division; or in case the Justices of the Peace of the city, borough, or town, where such meeting shall be proposed to be holden, shall have exclusive jurisdiction, then to three of such Justices, if so many shall then be resident within such jurisdiction, and if not, then to so many of such Justices as shall be resident within such exclusive jurisdiction; and in such case, such notice so given by such means as aforesaid, shall be as effectual, to all intents and purposes, as if the same had been given by public advertisement, inserted in any such newspaper as aforesaid.

III. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all meetings, of any description of persons, exceeding the number of fifty persons (other than and except as aforesaid), which shall be holden without such previous notice as aforesaid, for the purpose or on the pretext of considering of or preparing any petition, complaint, remonstrance, declaration, or other address, to the King, or both Houses, or either House of Parliament, for alteration of matters established in Church or State, or for the purpose or on the pretext of deliberating on any grievance in Church or State, shall be deemed and taken to be unlawful assemblies.

IV. And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any persons, exceeding the number of fifty, being assembled contrary to the provisions hereinbefore contained, and being required or commanded by any one or more Justice or Justices of the Peace, or by the Sheriff of the County or his Under Sheriff, or by the Mayor or other Head Officer or Justice of the Peace of any city or town corporate, where such assembly shall be, by Proclamation to be made in the King's name, in the form herein-after directed, to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, shall, to the number of twelve or more, notwithstanding such Proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of one hour after such command or request made by Proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of twelve or more, after such command or request made by Proclamation, shall be adjudged felony without benefit of clergy, and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death, as in case of felony, without benefit of Clergy.

V. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the order and form of the Proclamation to be made as aforesaid shall be as hereafter followeth; (that is to say), the Justice of the Peace, or other person authorized by this Act to make the said Proclamation, shall, among the said persons assembled, or as near to them as he can safely come, with a loud voice command, or cause to be commanded, Silence to be while Proclamation is making, and after that shall openly and with loud voice make, or cause to be made, Proclamation in these words, or like in effect:

'OUR Sovereign Lord the King chargeth and commandeth all persons being 'assembled immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their 'habitations or to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the Act, 'made in the thirty-sixth year of King *George* the Third, *for the more effectu-* '*ally preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies.*

'GOD SAVE THE KING.'

VI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case any meeting shall be holden, in pursuance of any such notice as aforesaid, and the purpose for which the same shall in such notice have been declared to be holden, or any matter which shall be in such notice proposed to be propounded or deliberated upon at such meeting, shall purport that any matter or thing by law established may be altered otherwise than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, or shall tend to incite or stir up the people

people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or of the Government and Constitution of this realm, as by law established, it shall be lawful for one or more Justice or Justices, or the Sheriff of the county where such meeting shall be, or for the Mayor or other Head Officer, or any Justice of the Peace of any city or town corporate, where any such meeting shall be, by Proclamation, to require or command the persons there assembled to disperse themselves; and if any persons, to the number of twelve or more, being so required or commanded, by Proclamation, to be made in the King's name, in the form herein-before directed, to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations, or to their lawful business, shall, to the number of twelve or more, notwithstanding such Proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of one hour after such command or request made by Proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of twelve or more, after such command or request made by Proclamation, shall be adjudged felony without benefit of Clergy, and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death, as in case of felony without benefit of Clergy.

VII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any one or more Justice or Justices of the Peace, present at any meeting requiring such notice as aforesaid, shall think fit to order any person or persons who shall at such meeting proceed to propound or maintain any proposition for altering any thing by law established, otherwise than by the authority of the King, Lords, and Commons, in Parliament assembled, or shall wilfully and advisedly make any proposition, or hold any discourse, for the purpose of inciting and stirring up the people to hatred or contempt of the person of his Majesty, his heirs or successors, or the Government and Constitution of this realm, as by law established, to be taken into custody, to be dealt with according to law; and in case the said Justice or Justices, or any of them, or any Peace Officer acting under their or any of their orders, shall be obstructed in taking into custody any person or persons so ordered to be taken into custody, then and in such case it shall be lawful for any such Justice or Justices thereupon to make, or cause to be made, such Proclamation as aforesaid, in manner aforesaid; and if any persons to the number of twelve or more, being required or commanded by such Proclamation to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart as aforesaid, shall, to the number of twelve or more, notwithstanding such Proclamation made, remain or continue together by the space of one hour after such command or request made by Proclamation, that then such continuing together to the number of twelve or more, after such command or request made by Proclamation, shall be adjudged felony without benefit of Clergy, and the offenders therein shall be adjudged felons, and shall suffer death, as in case of felony without benefit of Clergy.

VIII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every Justice and Justices of the Peace, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, and other Head Officer aforesaid, is and are hereby authorized and empowered, on notice or knowledge of any such meeting or assembly as is herein-before mentioned, to resort to the place where such meeting or assembly shall be, or shall be intended to be holden, or to any part thereof, and there to do, or order or cause to be done, all such acts, matters, and things, as the case may require, which they are hereby enabled to do, or order to be done, or which they are otherwise by law enabled to do, or ordered to be done; and it shall be lawful for all and every Justices of the Peace, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, and other Head Officer as aforesaid, to take and require the assistance of any number of Constables or other Officers of the Peace, within their respective districts, or within the district or place wherein every such meeting as herein-before mentioned shall be holden; which Constables and other Officers of the Peace are hereby required to attend accordingly such Justices, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, or other Head Officer respectively, and to give such assistance as shall be necessary for the due execution of this Act.

IX. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if such persons so assembled as aforesaid, or twelve or more of them, after any Proclamation made in manner aforesaid, shall continue together, and not disperse themselves within one hour, that then it shall and may be lawful to and for every Justice of the Peace, Sheriff, or Under Sheriff of the county where such assembly shall be, and also to and for every High or Petty Constable, and other Peace Officer within such county, and also to and for every Mayor, Justice of the

the Peace, Sheriff, and other Head Officer, High or Petty Conſtable and other Peace Officer, of any city or town corporate where ſuch aſſembly ſhall be, and to and for ſuch other perſon and perſons as ſhall be commanded to be aſſiſting unto any ſuch Juſtice of the Peace, Sheriff, or Under Sheriff, Mayor, or other Head Officer aforeſaid, who are hereby authorized and empowered to command all his Majeſty's ſubjects, of age and ability, to be aſſiſting to them therein, to ſeize and apprehend, and they are hereby required to ſeize and apprehend, ſuch perſons ſo aſſembled, and continuing together after Proclamation made as aforeſaid, and forthwith to carry the perſons ſo apprehended before one or more of his Majeſty's Juſtices of the Peace of the county or place where ſuch perſons ſhall be ſo apprehended, in order to their being proceeded againſt for ſuch offences according to law; and that if the perſons ſo aſſembled, or any of them, ſhall happen to be killed, maimed, or hurt in the diſperſing, ſeizing, or apprehending, or endeavouring to diſperſe, ſeize, or apprehend them, by reaſon of their reſiſting the perſons ſo diſperſing, ſeizing, or apprehending, or endeavouring to diſperſe, ſeize, or apprehend them, that then every Juſtice of the Peace, Sheriff, Under Sheriff, Mayor, Head Officer, High or Petty Conſtable, or other Peace Officer, and all and ſingular perſons, being aiding and aſſiſting to them or any of them, ſhall be free, diſcharged, and indemnified, as well againſt the King's Majeſty, his heirs and ſucceſſors, as againſt all and every other perſon and perſons, of, for, or concerning the killing, maiming, or hurting, of any ſuch perſon or perſons ſo aſſembled, that ſhall happen to be ſo killed, maimed, or hurt as aforeſaid.

X. Provided always, and be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That if any perſon or perſons do or ſhall, with force and arms, wilfully and knowingly oppoſe, obſtruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder, or hurt, any Juſtice of the Peace, or other perſon authoriſed as aforeſaid, who ſhall attend any ſuch meeting as aforeſaid, or who ſhall be going to attend any ſuch meeting, or any perſon or perſons who ſhall begin to proclaim, or go to proclaim, according to any Proclamation hereby directed to be made, whereby ſuch Proclamation ſhall not be made, that then every ſuch oppoſing, obſtructing, letting, hindering, or hurting, any ſuch Juſtice or other perſons ſo authorized as aforeſaid, and ſo attending, or going to attend any ſuch meeting, or any ſuch perſon or perſons ſo beginning or going to make any ſuch Proclamation as aforeſaid, ſhall be adjudged felony without benefit of Clergy, and the offenders therein ſhall be adjudged felons, and ſhall ſuffer death as in caſe of felony without benefit of Clergy; and that alſo every ſuch perſon or perſons ſo being aſſembled as aforeſaid, to the number of fifty or more as aforeſaid, to whom any ſuch Proclamation as aforeſaid ſhould or ought to have been made, if the ſame had not been hindered as aforeſaid, ſhall likewiſe, in caſe they or any of them, to the number of twelve or more, ſhall continue together, and not diſperſe themſelves within one hour after ſuch let or hindrance ſo made, having knowledge of ſuch let or hindrance ſo made, ſhall be adjudged felons, and ſhall ſuffer death as in caſe of felony without benefit of Clergy; and that alſo, if any perſon or perſons, ſo being at any ſuch aſſembly as aforeſaid, ſhall with force and arms wilfully and knowingly oppoſe, obſtruct, or in any manner wilfully and knowingly let, hinder or hurt, any Juſtice of the Peace, or other Magiſtrate, or any Peace Officer, in apprehending or taking into cuſtody, in execution of any of the proviſions of this Act herein-before contained, any perſon or perſons, or endeavouring ſo to do, that then every ſuch oppoſing, obſtructing, letting, hindering, or hurting, ſhall be adjudged felony without benefit of Clergy, and the offenders therein ſhall be adjudged felons, and ſhall ſuffer death as in caſe of felony without benefit of Clergy.

XI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, that the Sheriffs Depute and their Subſtitutes, Stewards Depute and their Subſtitutes, Juſtices of the Peace, Magiſtrates of Royal Boroughs, and all other inferior Judges and Magiſtrates, and alſo all High and Petty Conſtables, or other Peace Officers, of any county, ſtewartry, city, or town, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, ſhall have ſuch and the ſame powers and authorities, for putting this preſent Act in execution within Scotland, as the Juſtices of the Peace and other Magiſtrates aforeſaid reſpectively have, by virtue of this Act, within and for the other parts of this kingdom; and that all and every perſon

fon and perfons who fhall at any time be convicted of any of the felonies afore-mentioned, within that part of Great Britain called Scotland, fhall for every fuch offence incur and fuffer the pain of death, and confifcation of moveables.

XII. And whereas certain houfes, rooms, or places, within the cities of London and Weftminfter, and in the neighbourhood thereof, and in other places, have of late been frequently ufed for the purpofe of delivering lectures and difcourfes on and concerning fuppofed public grievances, and matters relating to the Laws, Conftitution, and Government and Policy of thefe kingdoms, and treating and debating on and concerning the fame; and under pretence thereof lectures or difcourfes have been delivered, and debates held, tending to ftir up hatred and contempt of his Majefty's Royal Perfon, and of the Government and Conftitution of this realm as by law eftablifhed: Be it therefore enacted by the authority aforefaid, that every houfe, room, field, or other place where lectures or difcourfes fhall be delivered, or publick debates fhall be had on or concerning any fuppofed public grievance, or any matters relating to the Laws, Conftitution, Government, or Policy of thefe kingdoms, for the purpofe of raifing or collecting money, or any other valuable thing, from the perfons admitted, whether fuch houfe, room, field or place, fhall be opened or ufed for any fuch purpofe alone, or for any fuch purpofe together with any other purpofe, or under whatever pretence the fame fhall be opened or ufed, to which any perfon fhall be admitted by the payment of money, or by tickets fold for money, or in confequence of his paying or giving, or having paid or given, or agreeing thereafter to pay or give, in any manner, any money or other thing, for or in refpect of his admiffion into fuch houfe, room, field, or place, unlefs the opening or ufing of fuch houfe, room, field, or place, fhall have been previoufly licenfed in manner herein-after mentioned, fhall be deemed a diforderly houfe or place, and the perfon by whom fuch houfe, room, field, or place, fhall be opened or ufed for the purpofe aforefaid, fhall forfeit the fum of one hundred pounds for every day or time that fuch houfe, room, field, or place, fhall be opened or ufed as aforefaid, to fuch perfon as will fue for the fame, and be otherwife punifhed at the law directs in cafes of diforderly houfes; and every perfon managing or conducting the proceedings, or acting as moderator, prefident, or chairman, at fuch houfe, room, field or place, or therein debating, or delivering any difcourfe or lecture for the purpofe aforefaid, and alfo every perfon who fhall pay, give, collect, or receive, or agree to pay, give, collect, or receive, any money or other thing, for or in refpect of the admiffion of any perfon into any fuch houfe, room, field, or place, or fhall deliver out, diftribute, or receive, any fuch ticket or tickets as aforefaid, knowing fuch houfe, room, field, or place, to be opened or ufed for fuch purpofe, fhall for every fuch offence forfeit the fum of One Hundred Pounds to fuch perfon as will fue for the fame.

XIII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That any perfon who fhall at any time hereafter appear, act, or behave him or herfelf as mafter or miftrefs, or as the perfon having the command, government, or management, of any fuch houfe, room, field, or place as aforefaid, fhall be deemed and taken to be a perfon by whom the fame is opened or ufed as aforefaid, and fhall be liable to be fued or profecuted, and punifhed as fuch, notwithftanding he or fhe be not, in fact, the real owner or occupier thereof.

XIV. And be it further enacted by the authority aforefaid, That it fhall be lawful for any Juftice or Juftices of the Peace, or Chief Magiftrate refpectively, of any county, city, borough, or place, who fhall by information upon oath have reafon to fufpect that any houfe, room, field, or place, or any parts or part thereof, are or is opened or ufed for the purpofe of delivering lectures or difcourfes, or for public debate, contrary to the provifions of this Act, to go to fuch houfe, room, or place, and demand to be admitted therein; and in cafe fuch Juftice or Juftices, or other Magiftrate, fhall be refufed admittance to fuch houfe, room, field, or place, or any part thereof, the fame fhall be deemed a diforderly houfe or place, within the intent and meaning of this Act; and all and every the provifions herein-before contained refpecting any houfe, room, field, or place, herein before declared to be a diforderly houfe, or place, fhall be applied to fuch houfe, room, field or place, where fuch admittance fhall have been refufed as aforefaid, and every perfon refufing fuch admittance

fhall

shall forfeit the sum of One Hundred Pounds to any person who shall sue for the same.

XV. Provided always, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be lawful for any Justice or Justices of the Peace, or Chief Magistrate respectively, of any county, city, borough, or place, where any such house, room, or other building, shall be licensed as aforesaid, to go to such house, room, or building so licensed, at the time of delivering any such lecture or discourse therein as aforesaid, or at the time appointed for delivering any such lecture or discourse, and demand to be admitted therein; and in case such Justice or Justices, or other Magistrate, shall be refused admittance to such house, room, or building, the same shall be deemed, notwithstanding any such licence as aforesaid, a disorderly house or place, within the meaning of this Act; and all and every the provisions herein-before contained, respecting any house, room, field, or place, herein-before declared to be a disorderly house or place, shall be applied to such house, room, or building, so licensed as aforesaid, where such admittance shall have been refused as aforesaid; and every person refusing such admittance shall forfeit the sum of One Hundred Pounds to any person who will sue for the same.

XVI. Provided nevertheless, and be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall be lawful for two or more Justices of the Peace of the county, city, town, or place, where any house, room, or other building shall be, which any person shall be desirous to open for any of the purposes aforesaid, by writing under their hands and seals, at their General Quarter Session of the Peace, or at any Special Session to be held for the particular purpose, to grant a licence to any person or persons desiring the same, to open such house, room, or other building, for the purpose of delivering for money any such lectures or discourses as aforesaid, on any of the subjects aforesaid, the same being clearly expressed in such licence, for which licence a fee of one shilling, and no more, shall be paid, and the same shall be in force for the space of one year, and no longer, or for any less space of time, therein to be specified; and which licence it shall be lawful for the Justices of the same county, city, town, or place, at any General Quarter Session of the Peace, to revoke and declare void and no longer in force, by any order of such Justices, a copy whereof shall be delivered to, or served upon the person to whom the said licence so revoked shall have been granted, or shall be left at the house, room, or building, for which such licence shall have been granted, and thereupon such licence shall cease and determine, and be thenceforth utterly void and of no effect.

XVII. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That any person entitled to any of the forfeitures aforesaid may sue by action of debt in any of his Majesty's Courts of Record at Westminster, or in the Courts of Justiciary or Exchequer in Scotland, when the cause of action shall arise in Scotland, in which action it shall be sufficient to declare that the defendant is indebted to the plaintiff in the sum of (being the sum demanded by the said action) being forfeited by an Act, made in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of his Majesty King George the Third, intituled, An Act for the more effectual preventing Seditious Meetings and Assemblies; and the plaintiff, if he shall recover in any such action, shall have his full costs: Provided also, that if any action or suit shall be brought against any person for any thing done in pursuance and in execution of this Act, the defendant may plead the general issue; and if a verdict pass for the defendant, or the plaintiff discontinue his or her action, or be nonsuited, or judgment be given against the plaintiff, then such defendant shall have treble costs.

XVIII. Provided also, That nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to extend to any lectures or discourses to be delivered in any of the Universities of these kingdoms, by any member thereof, or any person authorized by the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, or other proper Officers of such Universities respectively.

XIX. Provided also, and be it enacted, That no payment made to any schoolmaster or other person by law allowed to teach and instruct youth, in respect of any lectures or discourses delivered by such schoolmaster, or other person, for the instruction only of such youth as shall be committed to his instruction, shall be deemed a payment of money for admission to such lectures, or discourses within the intent and meaning of this Act.

XX. Pro-

XX. Provided alſo, That nothing in this Act contained ſhall be deemed to take away or abridge any proviſion already made by the law of this realm, or of any part thereof, for the ſuppreſſion or puniſhment of any offence whatſoever deſcribed in this Act.

XXI. And be it further enacted by the authority aforeſaid, That this Act ſhall be openly read at every Epiphany Quarter Seſſions of the Peace, and at every Leet or Law day.

XXII. Provided always, That no perſon ſhall be proſecuted by virtue of this Act, unleſs ſuch proſecution ſhall be commenced within ſix calendar months after the offence committed; and no action ſhall be brought, for any of the penalties by this Act impoſed, unleſs the ſame ſhall be brought within three calendar months next after the offence committed.

XXIII. Provided alſo, That this Act ſhall commence and have effect within the city of London, and within twenty miles thereof, from the day next after the day of paſſing this Act, and ſhall commence and have effect within all other parts of the kingdom, from the expiration of ſeven days next after the day of paſſing this Act, and ſhall be and continue in force for three years from the day of paſſing this Act, and until the end of the then next Seſſion of Parliament.

POPULAR MEETINGS.

WHIG CLUB OF ENGLAND, *Dec. 19.*

AN Extraordinary Meeting of this Club was held on Saturday, when the Honourable THOMAS ERSKINE was unanimouſly called to the Chair.

MR. ERSKINE, in a ſhort and very forcible Addreſs, ſtated the important purpoſe of this Meeting.

The Whig Club, he ſaid, had now exiſted for ſeveral years; if they looked back to the principles of their Aſſociation, and to the cauſes of it, they would find them to be this—that they had obſerved it to be the characteriſtic of the Councils of the preſent reign, to manifeſt a diſregard of the principles of the Britiſh Conſtitution, to bring the whole of the glorious ſyſtem, for which our anceſtors had ſo virtuouſly ſtruggled, into diſrepute; to countenance and advance the moſt groſs corruption, and to make it a practical part of Government by means of this foul and ſhameleſs debauchery, to encroach upon, and violate the privileges of the people. This was ſeen and lamented by all who had the true principles of the Conſtitution at heart, and it was therefore thought fit to aſſociate, as the Whig Club had aſſociated upon its original inſtitution, for the avowed purpoſe of maintaining thoſe principles, and of giving effect to them by the force of union; to endeavour, by their recommendation and example, to make thoſe principles be again reſpected and revered; and to procure, by every legal means, that they ſhould be followed up in practice. Such were the grounds of their original Aſſociation. Such were the reaſons that induced him and others to join it, for unleſs there had been ſtrong and imperious reaſons for ſuch an Inſtitution, he would never have entered into it. A Phyſician was not required for a man in health and vigour, but only for the ſick. He appealed to the country, if it was not in conſequence of marked, ſucceſſive invaſions of their privileges, that the Whig Club was inſtituted. They became a ſpecies of watchmen on the outworks of the Conſtitution; and finding that the encroachments were continued, and that a ſort of regular attack was carried on, they thought fit to encreaſe their numbers, and to eſtabliſh an Aſſociation of Freemen, who reverenced their liberties, and whoſe object it was to defend. They had maintained their Aſſociation with firmneſs; and though they had not made frequent appeals to the People, they had never

never ceased to observe with becoming interest what was passing. They had not thought it necessary upon every occasion to agitate the public mind, but they had supported the principles upon which they were at first associated, and they had done it in a way which to them appeared truly proper, by supporting that great and illustrious character, who, as a Patriot and a Statesman, was the best able to assert their Rights, and whose incorruptible mind, and unparalleled talents, made him the incessant object of Ministerial calumny.

It now, however, came to be a question, whether the country was not at this time in a very new and singular predicament, and whether the present circumstances did not demand the greatest activity on their part, than they had hitherto shewn? It had been the fashion of late to consider every man who talked of liberty, and who presumed to think and to act with the free spirit of our fathers, as a Jacobin, a Democrat, a Republican, and to tax every man as a seeker of anarchy and confusion, because he sought for the free and pure administration of the Constitution. He trusted they would not be deterred by these calumnies from the discharge of their duties. They would recollect and feel from dreadful experience that the People had not complained without cause of the corruptions which prevailed. To them they were indebted for the separation of the American colonies; to them they were indebted for the present ruinous war, which had brought upon us so many calamities, in the loss of blood and treasure, and, in finally bringing upon us the loss of the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press. Ministers had come, through these corruptions, to attach such penalties to the exercise of the most valuable privileges of the People, even of those privileges which were the characteristic of the British nation. The present, therefore, was not to be considered as a common occasion. They were called upon by the most sovereign obligations to their country, to their posterity, to pronounce their sentiments loudly on the condition into which they were put by these Acts.

Associations had been framed for the maintenance of corruption—Associations of men, benefited by the abuses of our system, and who were interested in substituting those abuses in the place of the pure and free practice of our system. These Associations had calumniated the People of England, and had made it the object of their measures to deprive them of the Constitution, which was their birth-right, by debauching them away from its genuine doctrines, and propagating tenets which have for their direct tendency to dissolve that grand incorporation of freedom, which is the essence of the British Constitution. These Associations had lately been employed in reconciling the People of England to the two Bills which had yesterday received the Royal Assent; in misrepresenting their provisions to make them pass through the means of delusion, and in procuring Petitions which might furnish a pretext for asserting that the People were favourable to the measure. These Associations had boldly declared, that a majority of the People were for these Bills; and that they had manifested a disposition to surrender an essential part of their Constitution on the reasons stated to them by his Majesty's Ministers. On this ground it was that he thought it incumbent upon them now to exert themselves to ascertain the truth or falsehood of this fact —and this could be only done by procuring the voice of the People from one end of the kingdom to the other. The means of doing this was by an Association, specifically to apply for the repeal of those two Acts. And this might be recommended and proposed to the People of Great Britain by the

Whig

Whig Club. It had been at all periods of our hiſtory the wiſe and prudent policy of the moſt illuſtrious men to recommend exertion in time as the true and ſafe means of warding off the conſequences of violence and diſorder. He held in his hand a paſſage, written by that diſtinguiſhed Gentleman, upon whoſe opinions the preſent Adminiſtration had chiefly repoſed in the war which they had brought upon their country. Let us ſee what were the opinions of this great writer upon the ſubject of ſeaſonable exertion on the part of the people. Mr. Burke, in his celebrated "Enquiry into the cauſe of the preſent Diſcontents," had ſaid

"It is therefore our buſineſs carefully to cultivate in our minds, and to rear to the moſt perfect vigour and maturity, every ſort of generous and honeſt feeling that belongs to our nature. To bring the diſpoſitions that are lovely in private life into the ſervice and conduct of the Commonwealth; ſo to be patriots, as not to forget that we are Gentlemen. To cultivate friendſhips, and to incur enmities. To have both ſtrong, but both ſelected; in the one to be placable; and in the other, immoveable. To model our principles to our duties and our ſituation; to be fully perſuaded, that all virtue which is impracticable is ſpurious; and rather to run the riſque of falling into faults in a courſe which leads us to act with effect, than to loiter out our days without blame, and without uſe. Public life is a ſituation of energy and power; and he treſpaſſes againſt his duty who ſleeps upon his watch, as well as he that goes over to the enemy.

"There is, however, a time for all things, and it is not every conjuncture which calls with equal force upon the activity of honeſt men; but critical exigencies now and then ariſe; and I am miſtaken if this be not one of them. Men will ſee the neceſſity of honeſt combination; but they may ſee it when it is too late. They may embody, when it will be ruinous to themſelves, and of no advantage to the country; and for want of ſuch a timely union as may enable them to oppoſe in favour of the laws, with the laws on their ſide, they may, at length, find themſelves under the neceſſity of conſpiring, inſtead of conſulting. The law for which they ſtand, may become a weapon in the hands of its bittereſt enemies; and they will be caſt, at length, into that miſerable alternative, between ſlavery and civil confuſion, which no good man can look upon without horror; an alternative in which it is impoſſible he ſhould take either part, with a conſcience perfectly at repoſe. To keep that ſituation of guilt and remorſe at the utmoſt diſtance, is therefore, our firſt obligation. Early activity may prevent late and fruitleſs violence. As yet we work in the light. The ſcheme of the enemies of public tranquillity has diſarranged, but has not deſtroyed us."

"This," ſaid Mr. Erſkine, "I have in view; I have to propoſe that you ſhall in time exert yourſelves to prevent the deſtruction which is otherwiſe inevitable. Why do I come now to this place? To propoſe that we ſhall unite, with the law on our ſide, peaceably, quietly, but ſtrenuouſly to move for the repeal of thoſe laws. It has been ſaid by Miniſters that there are a number of perſons diſaffected to Government, and who are alienated from the Conſtitution. If there are ſo, it will be impoſſible to bring them back; but if, as was more likely to be true, men were only diſguſted with the corruptions of the times, I have no doubt but in bringing us back to the invaded principles of the Conſtitution, they would be recalled to the love of that ſyſtem under which they enjoyed practical bleſſings. Let us then enter into a voluntary Aſſociation, the avowed and ſingle purpoſe of which ſhall be

be the repeal of these Acts. Let us invite the People of England to join us. Let us procure the voice of the nation, and ascertain the fact whether they are so supine as voluntarily to surrender without a groan the Constitution which has been their glory; whether it is their pleasure to give up the Bill of Rights, and rather to live under an absolute Government, than under the limited Monarchy which was their birthright. If such is their pleasure it is my duty cheerfully to submit. I shall conform myself to my new condition. It will not attach upon me so much as upon thousands of others, whose rank and situation in the country brings them more within the grasp of persecution. But I should not feel that I had done my part, nor discharged my duty, if I had not endeavoured to shew, that it is not the opinion of the People of England to make the surrender voluntarily that is imputed to them; and whatever may be the result of our endeavours, it will be no small consolation, that we have not neglected our duty, and that, at least, we have thus entered our solemn protest against the measure. I am convinced, however, that an Association, at the head of which there shall appear a number of the first and most distinguished names in the kingdom who possess the greatest stake, and who are incorporated with the fate of the country, will produce the happiest effects; it will give persons in the lower rank in society a bond of confidence; it will teach them the true and legal means of procuring the redress for which they pant, and will of course prevent the danger of wild, intemperate, and disorderly proceedings. I am sure that such an example is anxiously desired, and is particularly necessary; for the People want a point of union, a defined object, and names of consideration, to whose conduct and lead they may look; I know that this is the case in that country to which I owe my birth, and from the spirit which has manifested itself there, it is with pride that I look upon Scotland as my native country; the sentiments manifested in that part of the kingdom, not by a few individuals, but by great and most numerous bodies of men, give me reason to hope, that generally enlightened as the Scots people are by early education and mental improvement, we shall owe much to their united voice in delivering us from the dreadful operations of these laws; but they, in their correspondence with me, have generally expressed their desire of having the proper time of conduct pointed out to them by men, whose opportunities of knowledge, and whose station in life, make their example worthy to be followed. When, therefore, the People shall see that the most illustrious persons in the country do stand committed to the steady prosecution of a plan at once legal and quiet, when they see among others, the Noble Duke, whose veins are filled with that blood so dear to Englishmen, by the patriotic cheerfulness with which his glorious ancestor shed his part of it, shall put his name to this Association, and that he is determined to persevere in maintaining the cause of all the Nobility of England, of order, subordination, and of all the ranks which constitute the genuine incorporation of British society; there would be no longer want of confidence in the people at large. I have always felt that the great duty of all wise men, and of all true patriots, was to maintain the several orders and ranks of our community, and feeling as I have always done the proper pride of birth, my object is that those orders shall subsist for ever, and that through the preservation of all the ranks and rights of society, its proper tone shall be restored to the body of the British Constitution. This is the object that I

have,

have in view, and it was for this that I moved for this extraordinary meeting of the Society. An harmonious union of all the friends of freedom, bent and directed to the single object of an application to Parliament for the repeal of these Acts, cannot fail of accomplishing the end."

Mr. Fox said, that after the very clear and satisfactory manner in which Mr. Erskine had opened the purpose of their meeting that day, it would not be necessary for him to go at any length into the business. He had, in the course of a long Parliamentary life, seen many Bills brought forward which he had felt it his duty to oppose, but in point of attack on the fundamental principles of our freedom, and in direct infringement of even the vital parts of our Constitution, he had certainly never seen any measure so worthy of all legal and peaceable opposition as those Bills which had the day before passed into law. He had seen many Bills which attacked different parts of our Constitution, but these were the only measures which went to the very basis, since they directly attacked the privilege of speech and the freedom of the press. There never then was a period when it behoved men more to be on their guard, and to exert themselves in the recovery of fundamental rights so valuable. He congratulated the company that these Bills had aroused the people at large from the dangerous supineness in which they had been previously lulled, and that a spirit was aroused which would vindicate the privileges of the country. To that spirit they must look for the repeal of these laws; and there was no way in which it could be so forcibly called forth, nor so properly directed, as by an Association of the kind proposed by Mr. Erskine. Associations had produced great good in this country. It was also certain that Associations had produced much mischief; experience had shewn them that it was possible to procure men to associate for the end of supporting all manner of abuses, and all kind of encroachments; but the perversion of a good thing was not an argument against it; it was material however, for Gentlemen seriously to reflect upon what they were about to do. He recommended to them not to enter into this Association unless they were determined to persevere, and to give it all the effect which vigour, union, and zeal were calculated to bestow. He called on them therefore to consider well, before they embraced the plan which he should conclude with moving. If there were those who thought with him that these Acts did strike at those privileges which made the characteristic of British Freedom, then, such Gentlemen would agree on the propriety of entering on such an Association, and of pursuing the object of it with unceasing energy; but if there were any persons who thought that these measures merely resembled those that went before them, that they were only improvident and hasty, the effusion of party heat, and were not the result of a settled attack on the strong hold of British Liberty, then undoubtedly such persons would not think that the Bills warranted a measure so strong as a general Association. He requested of Gentlemen maturely to weigh the situation, and, if they agreed with him in thinking that those who were supine were little less blameable than those who gave their actual countenance to the infringements, then they would enter into the proposed plan of union with a hearty determination to prosecute the repeal of those laws by every legal means which the country had left to them. He should move for an Association, and, as the best means of giving it effect, he should move also for a Committee large and respectable in its names, to whom should be left

left the taſk of framing the plan, and directing the conduct of the buſineſs. If the ſpirit which had manifeſted itſelf in the country ſhould ſubſide, then indeed he ſaw no good that could ariſe from this meaſure; but even it would be ſome ſatisfaction to them that they had done their duty, and that their names ſhould be enrolled among thoſe who had exerted themſelves to preſerve the liberties of their country.

His firſt motion would be for an Aſſociation. His ſecond for a Committee to propoſe the plan. But again, he called on Gentlemen to deliberate. If there were any who thought that it was poſſible to compromiſe with thoſe Acts—If there were any who thought that after theſe Bills were law, the Conſtitution of Great Britain was the ſame as before they exiſted—If there were any who thought that our liberties were perfect, even if theſe laws continued unſtigmatized by the marked diſſent of the country; in that caſe it was fit that they ſhould act only as they had done in other caſes, and ſubmit without any complaint or petition. Even if they ſhould agree with him that this was a caſe which called for a more vigorous ſtile of oppoſition, and for more deciſive meaſures, yet ſtill they ought to conſider that this was an Adminiſtration fortified in their meaſures by no common means. Other Adminiſtrations had had their majorities, but it was the peculiar character of the preſent to have an alliance out of doors, more formidable than any that had gone before it—They had ſet out in defiance of the declared opinion of the Houſe of Commons, and they had a chain of Aſſociations all over the kingdom, which they made it their boaſt to employ as an engine upon every occaſion; and whoſe influence, in the inſtance of theſe Bills, had been moſt marked and notorious. If there ſhould be added to this the influence derived from the enormous increaſe of the revenue, and as much from the new circumſtance in our hiſtory, of ſuch an increaſe of our army as to make almoſt all England a ſet of barracks and camps, they would feel that they had to contend with no common power; and this was ſtill more manifeſt, when to all this power it would be ſeen that Miniſters did not ſcruple to employ the means of the General Poſt Office, in the circulation of all kinds of miſrepreſentation, of which he gave ſeveral moſt glaring inſtances with reſpect to theſe Bills. He truſted, however, that if they were animated with becoming zeal, if they felt the ſacred cauſe of liberty in their hearts, all this formidable phalanx of aſſociated abuſe would ſhrink before the torrent and force of public opinion, truely, boldly, and legally expreſſed. He paid a warm compliment to the Noble Duke whoſe conduct had been ſo uniformly upright, and he concluded with declaring his perſuaſion, that as there never was a time when a call for men of high rank to come forward was more urgent, it would be felt that gratitude was never more due than where that call was ſo firmly anſwered. He then moved, "That an Aſſociation be entered into to procure by every legal and peaceable means the repeal of the two Acts, entitled, "An Act for the better Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government;" and "to prevent all Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies."

The Duke of Bedford ſaid, that he was very averſe from taking up the time of the company unneceſſarily. He ſhould only ſay that if there were any who were diſinclined to put the plan of an Aſſociation vigorouſly into practice, it would be fit for them to ſtate their objections, for unleſs it were purſued with vigour it would do more harm than good. If they ſlackened in the execution, Miniſters would have an apparent triumph from their inactivity, and would be able to ſay, that the people were tried and were found to be in favour of the new ſort of Government. The Noble Duke thought

thought that this kind of Aſſociation was neceſſary alſo for another purpoſe. The inſtances of deſperate apoſtacy from the cauſe of the Conſtitution, by men to whom the People had been accuſtomed to look with reverence, and peculiar truſt, had given ſuch a ſhock to all ideas of public and diſintereſted virtue, that it was no wonder the People had not confidence in the profeſſions of any political characters. It was therefore peculiarly incumbent upon men to ſtate their principles in ſo unequivocal a way, as ſhould hold them out to the detection and contempt of all mankind, if they deviated from the duties which they undertook to fulfil. After the inſtances of profligate and corrupt apoſtacy which had occurred, in which the perſons who had ſo ſolemnly pledged themſelves to the People, had not only joined with Miniſters in the preſent ruinous War, but alſo in the meaſures which they had now particularly to deplore, it was quite neceſſary that every public man ſhould ſo commit himſelf as to enable the People to fix ſhame and diſgrace upon his name, if he ſhould ever abandon the cauſe in which he had embarked.—For this, among other purpoſes, it gave him pleaſure to riſe and ſecond the motion made by Mr. Fox. He thus pledged himſelf to the proſecution of the Repeal of thoſe Acts, by every means which the law and quiet of the country could authoriſe.

Mr. Erskine then put the queſtions, which were carried *nemine contradicente*, and a Committee was appointed, conſiſting of a number of moſt eminent perſons, to propoſe a plan for an Aſſociation, in which the people of every part of the country is to be invited to join, and with all the branches of which there ſhall be conſtant correſpondence.—This Aſſociation to have for its ſingle object the repeal of the laws paſſed on Friday laſt, the 18th. inſtant.

AT a Meeting of the General Committee of the Whig Club, held at the Shakeſpeare Tavern, on Saturday, January 23, 1796,

The Right Honourable C. J. FOX in the Chair,

Reſolved, That the following Declaration be adopted and publiſhed as the Declaration of the Whig Club:

When a Society of Private Men feel themſelves bound to propoſe a great national meaſure to the People, juſtice to their own character, and reſpect for the public judgment, require that they ſhould make known the reaſons which have moved them to ſuch a proceeding. We confeſs that it is, and ought to be unuſual, becauſe it can be juſtified by no ordinary circumſtances: but we think that the ſituation of the country no longer permits us to confide the ſupport of our principles to the individual exertions of our Members. The Whig Club, invariably adhering to the principles of the Britiſh Conſtitution, as eſtabliſhed at the Revolution, cannot be unconcerned ſpectators of the deſtruction of the moſt important ſecurities of public liberty which were provided at that glorious æra. The Conſtitution can, in our judgment, now only be reſtored by the exerciſe of that juſt authority which the national opinion muſt ever poſſeſs over the proceedings of the Legiſlature. We therefore deem it our duty, by every means which yet are legal, to appeal to the judgment of the People, and to procure a declaration of their opinion. With this view we have invited our fellow-ſubjects to aſſociate for obtaining the repeal of two Statutes paſſed in the preſent Seſſion of Parliament.

In one of theſe Statutes we ſee public aſſemblies of Britiſh ſubjects, though their proceedings ſhould be the moſt orderly and peaceable, and their object

ject unqueſtionably legal, fettered by reſtrictions hitherto unknown to the law and practice of this kingdom. Thoſe Meetings which ſhall not ſubmit to theſe new and diſgraceful conditions are ſubjected to diſperſion under pain of death; and thoſe which ſhall be held in compliance with them, are made liable to ſuch perpetual and vexatious interruption, at the diſcretion of Magiſtrates, that there never can be wanting an opportunity for diſturbing their deliberations, and defeating their objects. Such a law we cannot but regard as repugnant to the genius and character of this free nation. The Conſtitution of Great Britain is eſtabliſhed on the conſent and affection of the People, and can only reſt, with dignity or ſafety, on thoſe genuine foundations of all ſocial authority. When purely adminiſtered, it will ever make itſelf reſpected by its own beneficence and juſtice. It has for ages inſtructed the world by the example of a Government which builds its ſtrength only on its juſtice, and ſecures the obedience of its ſubjects by their love of liberty. It can neither require the aid of a ſyſtem of conſtraint and terror, nor even receive it without danger of deſtruction. Its ruling principle is the right of the People to manifeſt their opinion on their public concerns; a right of which the frequent, unreſtrained, and fearleſs exertion can alone create and preſerve in a People that free ſpirit and conſcious independence, without which the forms of a free Conſtitution are worthleſs and unavailing. This right alone guards and protects the ſecure enjoyment of every other privilege. The Houſe of Commons is our ſecurity againſt the encroachments of the Crown. The King's prerogatives and the privileges of the Houſe of Peers are our ſecurities againſt our own Repreſentatives. But no human wiſdom can provide any ſafeguard againſt a poſſible combination of all the branches of the Legiſlature to oppreſs or betray the community, but by enabling the great body of the Nation freely to pronounce their opinion on the acts and meaſures of Government, by petition and remonſtrance to the King, or either Houſe of Parliament, and by ſpeech and publication to their fellow-ſubjects; unfettered by any previous reſtraint, and ſubject only to the animadverſion of the law on thoſe overt acts of treaſon, tumult, diſorder, or ſedition, which may be committed by individuals under pretence of exerciſing theſe invaluable rights. This unreſtrained communication of opinion is at once the only check to which it is poſſible to ſubject Supreme Power, and the wiſeſt means for averting popular violences. To watch the exerciſe of theſe rights with ſuſpicion, to clog it with jealous and ignominious conditions, and, above all, to ſubject it to the arbitrary diſcretion of Magiſtrates appointed by the Crown, is to break that ſpirit from which ſuch privileges derive their whole uſe and value. To impoſe on them any previous reſtraint is ſubſtantially to take them away. They cannot be ſo reſtrained without being reduced to a dependance on the pleaſure of that very authority upon which they are to operate as a controul, and againſt which they are reſerved as a ſecurity. To reſtrain is therefore to deſtroy them.

But the provident wiſdom of our anceſtors did not leave theſe ſacred privileges to reſt on the mere foundation of their own juſtice and neceſſity: they were ſolemnly aſſerted at the Revolution in the inſtance of Petition, where they had been recently violated. The great Stateſmen and Lawyers who framed the Declaration of Rights, when they aſſerted the right of the People to petition, did, by neceſſary implication, alſo aſſert their right of aſſembling to conſider ſuch matters as might legally be the ſubject of petition. The aſſertion of a right comprehends that of the means which are neceſſary for its exerciſe. The reſtraint of the preſent Statute, therefore, in our opinion,

opinion, amounts to an abrogation of the moſt important article in that ſolemn compact between the Britiſh nation and the new race of Princes whom it raiſed to the Throne.

Though the other Statute of which we complain be ſpeciouſly intituled, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government," we are confident that by our oppoſition to it we ſhall not incur the imputation of diſloyalty among honourable and reaſonable men. We have formed our principles of loyalty upon thoſe of a Parliament which had recent and ample experience of the effect of ſanguinary laws; and we ſhall deliver the Declaration in the memorable language of their record: "The ſtate of every King, Ruler, and Governor of every realm, dominion, or commonalty, ſtandeth and conſiſteth more aſſured by the love and favour of the ſubjects towards their Sovereign Ruler or Governor, than in the dread and fear of laws made with rigorous pains and extreme puniſhment."

Guided by this principle of our anceſtors, which appears to us to be as full of truth and wiſdom as of humanity, we cannot view without alarm an attempt to remove thoſe boundaries of treaſon which were aſcertained and eſtabliſhed by the Act of Edward the Third; a law which has been endeared to Engliſhmen by the experience of four centuries; by a recollection of the peace and happineſs which have ever prevailed in thoſe fortunate periods when it was obſerved; by a review of that oppreſſion of innocence and inſecurity of Government, which have almoſt univerſally accompanied or followed every departure from its ſtrict letter; and by the zeal and ardour with which ſo many ſucceſſive Parliaments, after experience of the miſchiefs of ſuch deviations, have recurred, as to a refuge from theſe miſeries, to the ſimplicity, preciſion, and humane forbearance of that venerable Statute.

Another clauſe of the ſame Act which authorizes the puniſhment of tranſportation on the ſecond conviction, even for words ſpoken, appears to us equally repugnant to the merciful ſpirit of the Law of England. By applying the puniſhment of felony to a miſdemeanor frequently of no very aggravated guilt, it converts what was deſigned as the chaſtiſement of profligate and dangerous offenders into an engine, by which a Miniſter may cruſh his political opponents.

The infliction of cruel and unuſual puniſhment is prohibited by the tenth clauſe of the Bill of Rights; and although that clauſe was undoubtedly pointed at the then recent abuſe of judicial diſcretion in the caſes of State offenders, yet it is founded on a principle which condemns the Legiſlative introduction of a puniſhment ſtill more cruel and unuſual than any which is recorded even in the deteſtable annals of the Star Chamber.

It is indeed a puniſhment, which, in the feelings and apprehenſions of thoſe who are likely to be the objects of the vengeance of power, is ſcarce inferior to death. Had it in former times been ſanctioned by the Legiſlature, it might have ſubjected the moſt illuſtrious aſſertors of our Liberties, a Locke or a Somers, to the combined miſeries of baniſhment, impriſonment and ſlavery in a barbarous country, with a gang of outcaſts and felons. Removed from the view of their fellow ſubjects, their ſufferings in a remote region are forgotten or unknown, and their ſpirit is no longer ſupported by that conſolation which they might otherwiſe have found in general ſympathy for an unjuſt conviction or a cruel puniſhment, while diſtance and oblivion deliver the agents of power from that dread of public obſervation and reſentment, which is ſo wholeſome and neceſſary a check on the tyrannical ex-

ercif•

ercife of authority. The ſame rigour, which, if practiſed at home, would ſpread the alarm of tyranny throughout the nation, may be inflicted in a diſtant exile without odium or danger. It is the nature of this puniſhment to be, at once, the moſt ſafe for thoſe who inflict, and the moſt cruel to thoſe who ſuffer it, to deprive the oppreſſed of conſolation, and to deliver the oppreſſor from reſtraint.

The authors of theſe Satutes do, indeed, expreſsly admit that they materially reſtrain the liberty of the ſubject, but they contend that ſuch reſtraints are neceſſary, and that if neceſſary they are juſt.

We do not affirm that general principles are never in any degree to give way to the exigency of circumſtances. But we aſſert, that the Right of Diſcuſſion and Remonſtrance is ſo eſſential to the Conſtitution, that it cannot be controuled or reſtrained, without a ſurrender of the Conſtitution itſelf. When pleas of neceſſity are urged, let it never be forgotten that pleas of neceſſity are the ready inſtruments and common juſtifications of power without right, and that the means by which nations are enſlaved have ever been pretended to be neceſſary to their ſecurity. We never can admit that the delinquency of individuals ought to work a forfeiture of the Liberties of a nation. A neceſſity for new reſtraints and penalties could only have ariſen in the preſent inſtance, from the inadequacy of the Law, which we on our part utterly deny, which neither has been nor can be proved, and which the preambles of theſe Acts themſelves do not even venture to aſſert. Laws, ſuch as theſe, we ſhould have felt it our duty, at all times, moſt ſtrenuouſly to have oppoſed. But there are many circumſtances peculiar to the preſent time, which appear to us greatly to aggravate their malignity and danger. We cannot forget the ſyſtem of meaſures of which they are a part, the diſpoſition from which they appear to flow, the reaſons by which they are ſupported, and the conſequences to which they ſeem intended to lead.

They originate with Miniſters who are making daily encroachments on the Conſtitution, who patronize the diſſemination of opinions which tend to its ſubverſion, and who have never ſpared any vigour of political perſecution, to cruſh that freedom of diſcuſſion which endangered their own power. They are attempted to be juſtified on principles fruitful in future encroachments on Liberty, and by reaſons, which, if they were valid, would compel us to conclude, that the free Conſtitution of Great Britain is no longer compatible with its quiet, and that our only refuge from Anarchy is in the eſtabliſhment of Deſpotiſm. They are introduced in the midſt of a calamitous war, when the ſolicitude of many good men for liberty has been weakened, by an artfully excited dread of confuſion, and when the overgrown influence of the Crown receives continual acceſſions of ſtrength from the burthens and diſtreſſes of the people. They are the meaſures of men, who, by an unexampled waſte of public money, have acquired unbounded means of corruption. They have been paſſed into Laws when a Standing Army, great beyond example, is kept up in the heart of the kingdom; when an attempt is ſyſtematically, though, we truſt, vainly purſued to divide the Soldiery from their fellow-ſubjects; at a time when every effort has been employed to ſubdue the ſpirit of the people, to prevent their opinions, and to render their moſt virtuous feelings ſubſervient to the deſigns of their oppreſſors. Thus poſſeſſed of the combined influence of deluſion, corruption, and terror, the framers of theſe Acts ſeem to have thought the favourable moment at length arrived for ſecuring impunity to their own offences, and permanence to the

cor-

corruptions and abuſes of Government, by impoſing ſilence on the people. This project has hitherto been ſucceſsful. By the extenſion of the Law of Treaſon, and by the combination of vague deſcription with cruel puniſhment in other State offences, Miniſters have gained the moſt formidable engine of political perſecution that can be poſſeſſed by a Government. By reſtraints, amounting almoſt to prohibition, on the right of the people to aſſemble, to deliberate, and to petition, they have ſhaken the ſecurity of every other Civil and Political Privilege.

In this awful conjuncture it appears to us to be the duty of every man, who wiſhes to ſee his country neither ſubmitted to the yoke of ſlavery nor expoſed to the dreadful neceſſity of appealing to force, for the recovery of its Liberties, to unite in a reſpectful but firm application to the Legiſlature, for the deſtruction of theſe alarming innovations, and the reſtoration of the ancient Free Conſtitution of Great Britain. We cannot think that ſuch an effort will be unſucceſsful. The uſurpations on our Rights are yet recent and immature. The ſpirit of this nation is not, as Miniſters may have too haſtily ſuppoſed, extinct; and prudence itſelf will not ſuffer the Legiſlature to deſpiſe the collective opinion of the people.

They will rather, we truſt, imitate the conduct of that wiſe Parliament, whoſe language we have already quoted, and, like them, declare, that "truſting his Majeſty's loving ſubjects will, for his clemency to them ſhewed, love, ſerve, and obey him the more heartily and faithfully, than for dread and fear of pains of body, his Majeſty is contented and pleaſed that the ſeverity of ſuch like extreme, dangerous and painful laws ſhall be aboliſhed, annulled, and made fruſtrate and void."

To obtain this happy reſult, and to prepare the way for ſuch an application to Parliament, by Petition, as may carry with it the weight and authority of the National Opinion, we have invited our fellow-ſubjects to unite in the employment of every lawful means for procuring a repeal of theſe Acts.

The meaſure which we propoſe is unqueſtionably legal and conſtitutional: and it appears to us to be not only juſtified, but called for, by the exigency of the times. When Bad Men conſpire, Good Men muſt aſſociate.

Reſolved, That the following be the Form of Aſſociation.

"We whoſe names are hereunto ſubſcribed, calling to mind the virtuous and memorable exertions of our anceſtors in all paſt ages for the public happineſs and freedom of this nation, do ſolemnly engage and pledge ourſelves to each other, and to our country, to employ every legal and conſtitutional effort to obtain the repeal of two Statutes, the one intituled, "An Act for the more effectually preventing Seditious Meetings and Aſſemblies;" the other, "An Act for the Safety and Preſervation of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government, againſt Treaſonable and Seditious Practices and Attempts." Statutes which we hold to be ſubverſive of the ancient and undoubted Liberties of Engliſhmen, as claimed, demanded, and inſiſted upon at the Glorious Revolution in 1688, and finally declared, aſſerted, and confirmed by the Bill of Rights."

Reſolved, That the Select Committee do take ſuch ſteps as they ſhall think neceſſary to forward the objects of this Aſſociation; and that they do from time to time advertiſe the ſame in the Public Papers,

(Signed) C. J. FOX.

APPENDIX.

ALPHABETICAL LIST

OF THE

ADDRESSES

PRESENTED TO HIS MAJESTY,

WITH

THE DATES OF THEIR PRESENTATION,

AND

THE PASSAGES IN WHICH THE ADDRESSERS DEVIATED FROM THE ACCUSTOMED FORMS OF CONGRATULATION, TO GIVE THEIR OPINIONS ON THE MEASURES PENDING IN PARLIAMENT, OR ON THE GENERAL STATE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

For those which have appeared in the Body of this Work, a Reference is given to the Index.

APPENDIX, &c.

A.

ABERDEEN, Provoſt, Magiſtrates and Council, Nov. 17. It is with inexpreſſible concern we diſcern, that through the infatuation of the times, the very beſt names, as thoſe of Liberty and Virtue, are perverted into charms for decoying the ignorant, the weak, and the wicked, into ſituations the reverſe of thoſe which the names were intended to expreſs. By the bewitching term Liberty, men are enſnared into the vileſt deſpotiſm and anarchy; and by the word Virtue, as by a magical ſpell, they are lured into atheiſm and the utmoſt atrocity of guilt. Whilſt we highly condemn, we moſt ſincerely pity, the deluded wretches themſelves. It might have been thought, that even before now, time itſelf, conſidering the events it has produced, would have wrought a cure.

———, Conveener, Deacons, and Maſters of the Incorporated Trades, Nov. 21.

———, Volunteers, Nov. 21.

———, Preſbytery, Nov. 28.

———, County, Nobility, Juſtices of Peace, Commiſſioners of Supply, and other Landholders, Dec. 5.

———, King's College, Dec. 5.

———, Mariſchal College, Dec. 10.

Aberbrothock, Preſbytery, Dec. 26.

Abingdon, Mayor, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Alderney, States of, Nov. 17.

Allerton, North, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Andevor, Bailiffs, Approved Men, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Angleſea, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

Appleby, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Com. Council and Inhabitants, Dec. 8.

Argyleſhire, Volunteers, Dec. 15.

———, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, Juſtices of Peace and Commiſſioners of Supply, Dec. 15. We are happy to perceive that the Legiſlature are employed in meaſures to prevent ſimilar outrages in future, and to ſuppreſs thoſe ſeditious meetings which for ſome time paſt have ſo juſtly alarmed the peaceable inhabitants of theſe kingdoms.

Arundel, Mayor, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Aſhburton, Portreeves, Clergy, Freeholders, and principal Inhabitants, Dec. 1. For ourſelves, we humbly beg leave to aſſure your Majeſty, with the utmoſt abhorrence of ſuch rebellious behaviour, and with the warmeſt zeal for our holy religion, we ſhall moſt affectionately join with our loyal fellow ſubjects, in defence of your ſacred Perſon and Government, and are determined to accompany them in their moſt vigorous efforts for the ſupport and protection of their liberty and country, and to ſuppreſs all unlawful and ſeditious meetings, calculated only to introduce anarchy and confuſion, and ſubvert all order and government.

Auchterarder, Preſbytery, Dec. 3.

Axbridge, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and capital Burgeſſes, Nov. 24.

Ayr, Provoſt, Magiſtrates and Council, Nov. 17.

——, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Commiſſioners of Supply, Dec. 1. In theſe extraordinary times, Sire, we beg leave to take the reſpectful liberty of expreſſing to your Majeſty the ſatisfaction we feel at the meaſures at preſent purſued by the Legiſlature, for ſecuring to theſe kingdoms the bleſſings of their conſtitutional monarchy, and we rely with confidence for their completion on the wiſdom of Parliament.

——, Preſbytery, Dec. 10. We have the moſt perfect confidence in the wiſdom of your Majeſty's Councils, ſupported by the wiſdom of Parliament, that the moſt proper and effectual means will be deviſed for preventing in future ſimilar outrages.

Ayr,

Ayr, Officers, and Gentlemen Privates of the Corps of Volunteers, Dec. 15. We beg leave to solicit your Majesty, to give that sanction, vested in you by law, to such necessary and salutary regulations, as may be adopted by Parliament for repressing, preventing, and punishing these hitherto unheard of enormities.

B.

Banbury, Mayor, Aldermen, and capital Burgesses, Dec. 1.

Banffshire, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Justices of Peace, Dec. 3.

———, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 3. We humbly hope your Majesty, aided by the wisdom of Parliament, will adopt such effectual measures, as shall finally conduce to the safety of your sacred Person, and the preservation of our inestimable Constitution against all attempts of your open or concealed enemies.

———, Town, Provost, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 3.

Bangor, Diocese, Bishop, Dean, Chapter, and Clergy, Dec. 10. We observe, with the deepest concern and regret, that neither the laws in being, nor even your Majesty's personal qualities, could secure you against the treasons and conspiracies of these times; and we therefore most earnestly hope and trust that the wisdom of Parliament will speedily devise such salutary measures as will effectually check and restrain this daring spirit of sedition.

Barnsley, Inhabitants, Dec. 10.

Barnstaple, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 17.

Basingstoke, Volunteers, Yeomanry, Cavalry of the Division, Dec. 19.

Bath, Inhabitants and Visitors, Nov. 14. They express a hope, that through the wisdom of Parliament, all seditious and tumultuous meetings, tending evidently to anarchy and confusion, may, by salutary laws, be effectually suppressed.

——, Mayor, Aldermen, and chief Citizens, Nov. 14.

—— and *Wells*, Diocese, Dec. 26. It is with the utmost concern and astonishment we observe, (under our happy Constitution of Government, and your Majesty's wise and just administration of it) certain factious and malignant spirits, taking advantage of the unhappy pressure of the times, to poison the minds and inflame the passions of the ignorant and unwary, in order to introduce a dreadful scene of anarchy and confusion.

Bedford, Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs, Burgesses, Commonalty and Inhabitants, Dec. 8. We beg leave to express our earnest hopes, that effectual measures may be adopted for the prevention of any similar attempt in future.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 19. We cannot help thinking, that such evil and malicious designs are stirred up and excited by the many seditious meetings and assemblies held in and about the metropolis; but we are in a great measure relieved from the apprehension of any future evil consequences of these assemblies, by the hope that Parliament will, in its wisdom, provide such measures as may suppress meetings, which are not only highly offensive to the public peace, and the good order of society, but also dangerous to the happy Constitution of this realm.

———, County, Counter-Address. Not in the Gazette. See Index, Art. Bedfordshire.

Berkshire, High Sheriff, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We see with the utmost disapprobation and alarm, the industry which is still employed in the dissemination of those principles, which have a natural tendency to produce those atrocious crimes against your Majesty's Person, and against the established Government and Constitution of our country.

Berwick, Loyal Volunteers, Officers and Privates, Nov. 28. Permit us, Sire, to express our great satisfaction, respecting the Bill about to be passed by your Parliament, for the greater security of your Majesty's sacred Person, as aiming *only* at such men as are dangerous to society, and unworthy the protection of your Majesty's mild and happy government.

———, County, Nobility, Freeholders, Justices of Peace and Heritors, Dec. 3. We have no doubt that your Majesty, with the advice of your Parliament, will adopt such measures as will effectually preserve and insure peace and good order over the whole of your Majesty's dominions.

——— *upon Tweed*, Mayor, Bailiffs, Burgesses, Dec. 8.

——— North, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 19. We see, with the greatest satisfaction, those wholesome measures now adopted by your Majesty's two

two Houſes of Parliament, for the protection of your Perſon and Government, and for the ſuppreſſion of all ſeditious ſocieties.

Beverley, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and capital Burgeſſes, Nov. 14.

———, Independent Volunteers, Dec. 19. Viewing with horror and concern the rapid diſſemination, for ſome time paſt, of opinions and doctrines ſo ſubverſive of all regular Governments, and ſo deſtructive to ſociety itſelf, we come forward, &c.

Bewdley, Bailiff and Burgeſſes, Dec. 26.

Bideford, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, capital Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 14.

Birmingham, Inhabitants, Nov. 14.

Blackburn, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

Bolton le Moors, Inhabitants, Dec. 3. We truſt that the diſcretion and firmneſs of the Legiſlature will make ſuch wholeſome proviſions, that, with the bleſſing of Almighty God upon their endeavours, your Majeſty's Perſon may be henceforth ſecured from ſecret conſpiracies and open violence, and that our Conſtitution may remain, to the lateſt generations, an undoubted monument of legal and religious wiſdom.

Boſton, Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, Dec. 19. We view with infinite ſatisfaction the zeal and activity of the Legiſlature, in endeavouring to prevent ſuch riotous proceedings in future.

———, Inhabitants, Dec. 26. Our minds being deeply impreſſed by theſe ſentiments, and by a ſtrong attachment to our happy Conſtitution, we earneſtly hope that effectual meaſures will be taken for preventing in future all attempts againſt your Majeſty's Perſon and Government.

Bradford, Gentlemen, Clergy, Manufacturers, Merchants, and Inhabitants, Dec. 10. We will exert ourſelves to give efficacy to ſuch ſalutary laws as, in the wiſdom of Parliament, may be thought expedient at this criſis, for the prevention of thoſe ſeditious meetings, which have been too long the bane of this country.

———, Volunteers, Dec. 10. It is our firm opinion that it (*the aſſault*) originated in certain ſeditious meetings, ſpeeches, and writings, tending to alienate the minds of the people from your Majeſty's mild Government, and to ſubvert the happy Conſtitution of this kingdom.

Brechin, Preſbytery, Dec. 5.

———, Magiſtrates and Town Council, Dec. 12. We truſt Parliament, in its wiſdom, will take effectual meaſures to prevent any ſuch daring outrage in future.

Brecknock, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

———, Bailiff, Recorder, Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Dec. 8.

Bridgnorth, Bailiffs, Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and other Inhabitants, Nov. 17.

Bridgewater, Loyal Volunteer Corps, Nov. 28.

Bridlington, Volunteer Artillery, Dec. 10.

Bridport, Inhabitants, Dec. 10. We humbly beſeech your Majeſty will, in conjunction with your Parliament, take ſuch ſteps as may appear moſt likely to ſtop the rapid progreſs of ſeditious meetings, which are the fountains from which the moſt alarming and calamitous evils are likely to proceed.

Briſtol, Mayor, Burgeſſes, and Commonalty, Nov. 14.

——, Gentlemen, Clergy, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 28.

——, Merchant Volunteers, Nov. 28.

——, Dioceſe, Biſhop, Dean, Chapter, and Clergy, Dec. 10. We look with confidence to the wiſdom of the Legiſlature, to provide ſuch further ſecurities as may be moſt likely to defeat, in future, the machinations of evil-minded men.

Broomſgrove, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Buckingham, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Nov. 28. We find ourſelves called upon to declare our deteſtation and abhorrence of thoſe execrable opinions and proceedings, by which the perpetrators of this daring and outrageous act have been induced to this attempt on the ſafety of our beloved King, and on the firſt and moſt ſacred principles of our invaluable Conſtitution.

Buckingham, Corporation, Nov. 28. We feel ourſelves bound to declare our firm determination to ſupport your Majeſty, in defending to the utmoſt that Conſtitution which we have ſeen attacked by the evil machinations of wicked men, to whoſe abominable principles and proceedings we attribute this daring outrage on your Majeſty's perſon, and on the happy Conſtiturion of theſe realms.

———, County, Armed Yeomanry, Dec. 3.

Bury St. Edmund's, Alderman, Reeorder, Coroner, Aſſiſtant Juſtices, Capital Burgeſſes, and Burgeſſes of the Common Council, Dec. 1.

Bute, County, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 8.

C.

Caernarvon, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5. We hope the happieſt and beſt conſequences may ariſe from a Bi l, now under the conſideration of your Parliament, to ſtrengthen the law agai ſt ſeditious meetings of all deſcriptions: for we have obſerved, with deep regret, that the mildneſs of the exiſting laws has hitherto rather encouraged than ſup preſſed the efforts of thoſe who have, on ſo many occaſions, of late manifeſted the ſtrongeſt and moſt enthuſiaſtic bias to the introduction of French principles and confuſion into this country.

Caithneſs, County, Juſtices of Peace, Heritors, and principal Farmers, Dec. 5.

———, Preſbytery, Jan. 19.

Calne, Guild Stewards and Burgeſſes, Dec. 5.

Cambridge, Mayor, Aldermen, Common Councilmen, and Free Burgeſſes, Nov. 17.

———, County, Nobility, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

———, Univerſity, Chancellor, Maſters, and Scholars, Dec. 5.

Campbeltown, Magiſtrates and Council, Nov. 21.

Canterbury, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Sheriff, and Common Council, Nov. 28.

———, Dioceſe, Dec. 5. We cannot ſufficiently expreſs our horror and indignation at an attempt ſo atrocious. We recognize in it the malignant character and effects of thoſe deteſtable principles, which are the ſcourge and diſgrace of the age we live in, and which have been diſſeminated amongſt your Majeſty's ſubjects, unhappily, with too much ſucceſs, by ill-deſigning men.

———, Volunteers, Dec. 8.

Caniſbay, Heritors, Gentlemen, Volunteer Band, and whole Inhabitants, Dec. 26.

Cardiff, Conſtable of the Caſtle, Bailiffs, Aldermen and Burgeſſes of the Town, Bailiffs, Portreeves, Aldermen and Burgeſſes of the ſeveral contributory Boroughs, Dec. 1.

Cardigan, County, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

Carmarthen, Mayor, Burgeſſes, Commonalty, Dec. 8.

Carliſle, Gentlemen, Freemen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 12. We beg leave to expreſs our utter abhorrence, not only of this deſperate outrage offered to your Majeſty, but alſo of the dangerous principles which have of late been ſo induſtriouſly propagated, and which we cannot but conſider as connected with this alarming and deteſtable attempt. We reſt in firm confidence, that the wiſdom of the Legiſlature will adopt meaſures which ſhall effectually prevent ſuch criminal projects in future.

———, Dioceſe, Dec. 19. It is with much pain and indignation that we feel ourſelves conſtrained to connect this atrocious and deteſtable tranſaction with the many dangerous endeavours which have lately been made to delude the minds of the people, by ſeditious meetings and ſeditious publications. When we ſay theſe endeavours have been many and dangerous, we contemplate rather the magnitude of the crimes, and the inceſſant exertions of a few, than the peaceable diſpoſitions and good principles of the great body of your Majeſty's faithful ſubjects; for we are perſuaded, that there never was a time in the hiſtory of this country when a vaſt majority of the people were actuated by a more firm and affectionate attachment to your Majeſty's Perſon, and to the illuſtrious Houſe of Brunſwick, by a higher ſenſe of the ineſtimable value of the Conſtitution, or by a more determined zeal and promptitude to ſupport it. Permit us,

us, Sire, at the fame time that we acknowledge and lament the exiftence of a few difaffected perfons, to derive comfort and confidence from a firm expectation that the wifdom of your Majefty's Councils, and of Parliament, will devife fuch fuitable provifions and regulations, as may in future effectually defeat their wicked intentions, and by preventing, repreffing, and punifhing the circulation of pernicious doctrines, enfure the future fafety of your Majefty's Perfon, and of our excellent Conftitution in Church and State.

——, City, Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs, and Citizens, Dec. 26.

Catholic Roman, Peers, Commoners, and Clergy, Dec. 19.

Chanonry, Prefbytery, Jan. 9.

Chatham Dock-Yard and Ordinary, the Commiffioners, Officers, Clerks, Artificers, and Workmen, Nov. 28. We have the fulleft confidence that your Majefty, in conjunction with the two Houfes of Parliament, will take the propereft meafures for the fafety of your Majefty's Royal Perfon in future, for the happinefs of all your Majefty's fubjects, and for the good of the Britifh nation in every refpect.

——, Inhabitants of the Manor, Hundred, and Parifh, Dec. 12.

Chefter, Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, Nov. 21. We beg leave to offer our humble thanks to your Majefty, for your gracious Proclamation againft feditious and unlawful affemblies of men, who, under the fpecious pretences of Reform, fecretly intend to fubvert that order and fubordination, in which confift the ftability of Government, and the happinefs of Society.

——, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, Tradefmen, and other Inhabitants of the City, Nov. 21. It is our firm opinion and belief, that the late horrid defign againft your Majefty originated in fome of thofe feminaries of fedition, the Political Debating Societies, which are of late become fo alarmingly numerous; fo we hope and truft the Legiflature of thefe kingdoms will take into ferious confideration, and adopt the moft fpeedy and effectual means for the entire fuppreffion of them; more efpecially when fo recent and flagitious an inftance of the pernicious effects of the deteftable doctrines they promulgate were but too nearly being accomplifhed.

——, County Palatine, Lord Lieutenant, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, &c. Dec. 3.

——, Diocefe, Dec. 10.

Chefterfield, Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgeffes, Nov. 17.

Chichefter, Mayor, High Steward, Aldermen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 3. We know that your Majefty's attachment to this happy Conftitution, under which all your fubjects derive fo many bleffings, made your Majefty feel lefs concern for the danger to which your Royal Perfon was expofed on that occafion, than for this daring attack on the Conftitution itfelf, in the Perfon of the firft Guardian of our liberties. We fee it, Sir, in the fame light; as an attempt of the moft defperate men, encouraged by meetings of the moft dangerous tendency, to overturn our happy Government. We feel and refent it as an attack upon ourfelves, and all that is moft dear to us. It is our own caufe, Sir, that is at ftake. We truft and believe, that the number of thofe who, for their own ambitious purpofes, would draw on this happy ifland all the miferies which a neighbouring country has experienced, are but few, and that their indefatigable attempts to feduce others by falfe ideas of a liberty incompatible with one of its firft objects, the fecurity of property, will be rejected by the good fenfe of the people of England, who know how to value Religion and a Government—Laws.* But fhould fuch men be ever fo fuccefsful, and the deluded multitude ever fo great, we beg leave to affure your Majefty that we are ready, and fo, we truft, are a great majority of your Majefty's fubjects, to ftand forth for the prefervation of our Conftitution, and to fave it, or fall with it.

——, Diocefe, Dec. 19.

Chippenham, Bailiffs, Burgeffes, Freemen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Chriftchurch, Mayor, Burgeffes, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Cirencefter, Steward and Bailiff of the Borough, and Inhabitants of the Borough and Town, Dec. 12. The near connection which there manifeftly

* There feems to be an error here in the Gazette; the meaning probably is, "Government of laws," or "lawful Government."

existed between the late attempt and those pernicious principles which have been so industriously disseminated in this, and have produced such fatal consequences in another country, convinces us, that the attack was directed, not only against your Majesty's Person, but against that Constitution, to which we owe our prosperity. We earnestly hope, that such effectual remedies will be applied by the wisdom of Parliament, as may prevent a repetition of similar outrages.

Clackmannan, County, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, Com. of Supply and Heritors, Dec. 3.

Clitheroe, Bailiff and Burgesses, Dec. 8.

Colchester, Mayor, Aldermen, Assistants, and Common Council, Nov. 14. Our concern for so extraordinary an instance of violence is still farther heightened, scarcely conceiving that the same men, whose endeavours were used to excite tumult and disorder, would have had the audacity to disguise their wickedness by a pretence of seeking peace.

Congleton, Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, Dec. 1.

Cornwall, County, Sheriff, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19. We spare ourselves the pain of reciting, and your Majesty of recollecting, the wicked arts by which this influence has been produced on weak minds by designing and ambitious men. The scandalous misrepresentations which have been practised to seduce the unwary, the criminal hopes instilled into the idle and profligate, all aiming at one and the same object, the degradation and extinction of Monarchy, and the subversion of our established Constitution in Church and State.

Coventry, Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, Nov. 21.

Cromarty, County, Freeholders, Justices of Peace, Heritors, and Inhabitants, Dec. 8. We trust, that the measures now adopting by both Houses of Parliament, will give an effectual check to the designs of desperate and unprincipled men, who, presuming on the mildness of our laws, have brought sedition to a system, exciting false alarms, &c.

———, Volunteers, Dec. 15.

Culross, Magistrates, Council, and Inhabitants, Dec. 8. Beg leave to renew our assurances of our readiness to acquiesce with any measure your Majesty's Parliament may devise, for the more perfectly securing your most sacred Person and dignity from the evil machinations of profligate and designing men, and the permanency and purity of a Constitution and Laws, which have stood by ages the wonder and admiration of surrounding nations.

Cupar of Fife, Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council, Nov. 14.

———, Presbytery, Jan. 2. We acquiesce with the most entire confidence in those measures adopted by the wisdom of the Legislature, as a means, under Providence, of the greater security of your Majesty's Person, and of our happy Constitution. That either the one or the other should be treated with disrespect, or endangered by any who live under their happy auspices, we cannot help regretting as a mark of the basest pravity; and we impute a great proportion of it, among other causes, to the unguarded and violent intemperance of men, who being disappointed in their own selfish and ambitious views, scruple not by the most desperate and dangerous means, to hazard the vessel of the State, because they are not permitted to guide the helm.

D.

Dartmouth, Clifton, Hardness, Mayor, Bailiffs, and Burgesses, Dec. 5. It is with the greatest satisfaction we learn, that your Majesty, in conjunction with the Legislature, is taking such measures to secure your Royal Person from future insults, as well as to suppress those unlawful assemblies and seminaries of anarchy which have given rise to such outrages.

Daventre, Bailiff, Burgesses, Commonalty, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5. We feel the utmost detestation and abhorrence of the principles of all clubs and societies of wicked and designing men, who, unmindful of the advantages which all your subjects enjoy under your Majesty's mild Administration and Government, are endeavouring by all means in their power to subvert the Constitution of this country.

Deal, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 19.

Denbighshire,

Denbighſhire, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 10. We cannot but deprecate the aſſemblies of certain miſguided and ſeditious men, as the ſource from whence the work of miſchiefs may originate.

Derbyſhire, Sheriff, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

———, Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry, Dec. 19.

———, Town, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Town Clerk, Brethren, and Capital Burgeſſes, Dec. 19.

Devizes, Mayor and Burgeſſes, Nov. 14.

Devonſhire, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, Nov. 28. We ſhould vainly look for the principles of ſuch enormity in the genuine character of a brave and manly nation; but we conſider them as immediately proceeding from thoſe traitorous and ſeditious aſſemblies, which, by weaning the affections of the lower and leſs-inſtructed orders of the community from the true ſources of their happineſs, and by familiarizing their minds with crimes of foreign growth, aim at rendering them the inſtruments of attack upon the Liberties and Conſtitution of their country. We therefore learn, with the higheſt ſatisfaction, that your Majeſty has, in conjunction with the Legiſlature, taken meaſures to ſecure your Royal Perſon from future inſults, and we truſt that thoſe meaſures will operate to the total ſuppreſſion of all thoſe ſeminaries of treaſon and diſaffection, the exiſtence of which we deem to be incompatible with the ſafety of the realm.

Devon Eaſt, Yeomanry Light Dragoons, Officers and Privates, Dec. 1.

———, County, and *Exeter* City, Officers and Privates of the Volunteer Corps, Dec. 12.

Dingwall, Preſbytery, Dec. 12.

———, Magiſtrates and Council, Dec. 26. Wiſh that every poſſible conſtitutional method ſhould be adopted to prevent the repetition of ſo dangerous and diſgraceful an outrage.

———, Volunteer Corps, Dec. 26.

Doncaſter, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Council, Dec. 1.

Dorcheſter, Mayor, Aldermen, capital Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 28. It is with the greateſt ſatisfaction that we behold the wiſdom of Parliament already employed in taking ſuch meaſures as, we hope, will prevent a repetition of ſuch daring outrages in future.

Dornock, Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Council, Dec. 19. It is with the greateſt ſatisfaction that we obſerve your Majeſty's Parliament has loſt no time in deviſing means to repreſs the inſolence, and counteract the malice of the enemies of our happy Conſtitution, by whom the late outrages, we have no doubt, muſt have been perpetrated.

Dorſet, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 10.

Dover, Cinque Port Companies of Volunteer Infantry, Nov. 28. So deteſtable an attempt, proceeding from doctrines inſidiouſly inſtilled into the minds of your Majeſty's deluded ſubjects, tending to overthrow all ſocial order, and to ſubvert our happy and glorious Conſtitution.

———, Mayor, Jurats, and Common Council, Dec. 1.

Drayton Market, Corps of Cavalry, Dec. 12. Think it our duty, in the preſent momentous criſis, when the wild doctrines of ſeditious aſſemblies have daringly ripened into action (and which call therefore for the active interpoſition of the Legiſlature) to make a public expreſſion of our unfeigned attachment to your Majeſty.

Dudley, Inhabitants and Neighbourhood, Dec. 5. We entreat you, Sire, not to let the diſaffection of a few diminiſh your paternal confidence in the body of your Majeſty's faithful people, who muſt conſider this atrocious attack on the Conſtitution of the country, and which has ſerved but to ſtrengthen (if it were poſſible) their veneration and attachment to the beſt of Kings.

Dunbarton, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, Heritors, Juſtices of Peace, and Commiſſioners of Supply, Dec. 5. We anxiouſly hope that the wiſdom of the Legiſlature may deviſe ſuch means as will be preventive of the like outrages in future.

———, Magiſtrates and Council, Dec. 15.

———, Preſbytery, De c.15.

Dumfries, County, Freeholdres, Juſtices of Peace and Commiſſioners of the Land Tax, Dec. 3.

Dumfries, Corps of Royal Volunteers, Nov. 21.
———- Magiſtrates and Council, Nov. 21.
Dunbar, Magiſtrates and Council, Nov. 17.
——— Royal Volunteers, Nov. 28.
Dunblane, Preſbytery, Nov. 28.
Dundee, Preſbytery, Nov. 21.
———, Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Town Council, Nov. 21.
———, Armed Aſſociation of Volunteers, Nov. 24.
Dunfermline, Magiſtrates and Town Council, Nov. 17.
————, Preſbytery, Dec. 8.
Dunkeld, Preſbytery, Dec. 15.
Durham, Gentlemen, Freeholders, Freemen, and Inhabitants of the City, and Officers of the ſeventh Regiment of Light Dragoons, and of the Loyal Durham Fencibles lying there, Nov. 21.
———, Dioceſe, Dec. 26.

E.

Edinburgh, Lord Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Council, Nov. 17.
————, Volunteers, Nov. 21.
————, Principal and Profeſſors of the Univerſity, Nov. 21.
————, County, Noblemen, and Gentlemen, Freeholders, Juſtices of Peace, Commiſſioners of Supply, and Heritors, Nov. 24. We truſt that Parliament, in its wiſdom, will take efficient meaſures to prevent the miſchiefs that may ariſe from dangerous combinations of ill-deſigned people.
————, Conveener of the Trades and the Deacons of the whole Incorporations, Nov. 24. This atrocious conduct, wholly unſuitable to the character which Britiſh ſubjects have long maintained, we can attribute only to thoſe profligate principles, which daring innovators have of late laboured to inſtil into the minds of ignorant people in ſeditious aſſemblies. We conſider the outrage which has been offered to your Majeſty, in all its circumſtances, as a blow which has been aimed at the Conſtitution of this country.
————, Chairman, Directors, and Members of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, Nov. 28.
————, Society of Conſtables, Nov. 28. Selected from amongſt our fellow-citizens, as guardians of the peace of this City, we have had an opportunity of being fully convinced of the wicked intentions, and dangerous machinations, of a ſet of men, who, under various pretexts, endeavoured to delude the ignorant and unwary into unlawful combinations againſt your Majeſty and our happy Conſtitution. In proportion, however, as their vices have been developed, numbers of thoſe who have been deceived by them have returned to a ſenſe of their duty; and we have the happineſs of aſſuring your Majeſty, the influence of their ſeditious principles has in this place rapidly declined: and we are fully confident that the late attack on our happy Conſtitution, in the Perſon of your Majeſty, will tend more fully to diſcloſe their wicked purpoſes, and to unite your Majeſty's ſubjects in unſhaken principles of loyalty and affection to your Majeſty, under whoſe happy Government we have enjoyed ſo many bleſſings; and we alſo humbly hope, that your Majeſty's Parliament will adopt ſuch meaſures as may effectually prevent ſuch abuſes in future, and tend to the ſuppreſſion of every attempt to overturn the Conſtitution of our country.
————, Maſters, Aſſiſtants, and members of the Chartered Company of Merchants, Dec. 1. We humbly hope that your Parliament will adopt ſuch meaſures, as may appear to their wiſdom beſt ſuited for preventing in future whatever may lead to attempts of ſo wicked and criminal a nature.
————, Incorporation of Candlemakers, Dec. 3.
————, Society of Solicitors at Law, before the Commiſſary, Sheriff, and City Courts, Dec. 10. We would hope that the wiſdom of Parliament will take ſuch meaſures as they may ſee neceſſary, to prevent any miſchief to the Government, from the evil-deſigning or miſled.
Elgin, Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Community, Dec. 3. We truſt that the wiſdom of Parliament will adopt ſuch meaſures, as to prevent the repetition of ſuch daring and flagitious outrages on any future occaſion.
———, Preſbytery, Dec. 26.
Ely, Dioceſe, Dec. 10.

Eſſex,

Eſſex, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants, Nov. 28.

Eveſham, Mayor, Aldermen, Capital Burgeſſes, Recorder and Chamberlain, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

Exeter, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen and Common Council, Nov. 21.

———, Dioceſe, Dec. 26. As Miniſters of the Goſpel of Peace, we have ſeen, with the deepeſt concern, the introduction and progreſs of political principles and theories, moſt adverſe to public tranquillity and good order.

Eye, Bailiffs, principal Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 24. Will ſtrenuouſly diſcountenance any ſeditious aſſemblies, calculated, by the artful miſrepreſentations of dangerous and deſigning men, to excite diſcontent in the minds of the leſs-informed part of the community.

F.

Falmouth, Agents and Captains of Packets on this ſtation, Nov. 28. We ſhall ever be ready to take an active part in defending your Majeſty's life and dignity againſt the ſeditious and treaſonable combinations of thoſe, who by inſidious pretexts endeavour to delude your ſubjects into acts as deteſtable in themſelves, as they are unworthy of a brave and honourable people; fully perſuaded that nothing we poſſeſs, neither our liberty nor our property, can be ſafe, unleſs your Majeſty, the guardian of the laws, be in ſafety.

———, Mayor, Aldermen, capital Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. We trace this infamous attempt to the induſtry with which doctrines of the moſt ſeditious nature are publicly diſſeminated, calculated to diſſatisfy the minds of the people with the laws of their country, and ſtir them up to acts of treaſon and rebellion. We therefore truſt that effectual meaſures will be ſpeedily taken for enforcing the exiſting laws againſt practices of ſuch a dreadful tendency, and in caſe they ſhall not be ſufficient, that laws may be enacted for the prevention of this public evil, and for the protection of your Majeſty's royal perſon.

———, Mayor, Jurats, Commonalty and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. That a crime of this nature ſhould have exiſted, we can attribute only to the ſeditious and inflammatory doctrines but too ſucceſsfully propagated among us by thoſe violent ſpirits, who, having no hopes of accompliſhing their purpoſes of ambition and ſelf-intereſt, but by the introduction of anarchy and confuſion deem it expedient to deſtroy the Protector of our laws and liberties, in order to eſtabliſh their own power and conſequence on the ruin of all that is dear to us.

———, Officers and Volunteers of a corps of Infantry, Dec. 12. We ſhall always be ready to ſupport and defend, to the utmoſt of our ability, ſuch wiſe and ſalutary meaſures as now are, or may hereafter be brought forward for the ſecurity and protection of the lives and fortunes of all your Majeſty's loving ſubjects.

Fife, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen and Heritors, Nov. 14. We humbly and ſincerely hope that both Houſes of Parliament will take into their moſt ſerious conſideration, and uſe what methods may ſeem to them in their wiſdom fit, for ſuppreſſing thoſe daring and illegal meetings, ſo frequently held of late in and around the metropolis, which can tend to no good, moral or political; but, on the contrary, originate from the baſe machinations of a few deſigning men, who have nothing to loſe, and little to fear, mean, by impoſing upon the ignorance of the loweſt orders of your Majeſty's people, to ſubvert all regular Government, and to prey upon the property of the moſt reſpectable claſſes of your Majeſty's ſubjects.

Flint, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy and Freeholders, Dec. 12. We cannot be without our ſuſpicions, that ſuch evil and malicious deſigns are ſtirred up and excited by the many ſeditious meetings and aſſemblies held in and about the City of London. We do moſt fervently intreat your Majeſty to uſe every effort, with which the laws of this country have entruſted you, to diſperſe and ſuppreſs ſuch meetings as are not only highly offenſive to the public peace, and good order of ſociety, but threatening to overturn, if not ſpeedily prevented, your Majeſty's united kingdoms and Government.

Folk-

Folkſtone, Mayor, Jurats, Commonalty and Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

Fordoun, Preſbytery, Dec. 10. We would rejoice in the adoption of ſuch meaſures as might have a tendency to ſecure to us and to our poſterity the continuance of our free Conſtitution, and to prevent your Majeſty's feelings from being again wounded, and your Majeſty's ſafety endangered, by the violence of any of thoſe ſubjects, over whoſe intereſts your Majeſty has ever watched with the moſt paternal ſolicitude.

Fordyce, Preſbytery, Dec. 10.

Forfar, County, Freeholders, Commiſſioners of Supply, Juſtices of Peace, and other Gentlemen, Dec 1. We hope and truſt that the wiſdom of Parliament will adopt ſuch meaſures, as to prevent the repetition of ſimilar outrages on any future occaſion.

———, Provoſt, Magiſtrates and Council, Dec. 1. [A ſimilar clauſe to the above].

———, Volunteers, Dec. 3.

———, Preſbytery, Jan. 5.

Fowey, Deputy, Mayor, Aldermen and Inhabitants, Dec. 12. We expreſs our determination to exert ourſelves in the execution of the exiſting laws, and ſuch other regulations as Parliament may enact, for the prevention and ſuppreſſion of ſeditious writings, tending to inflame the minds of the ignorant and unwary, and to deſtroy all order and good government.

Free-maſons, Grand Lodge of Scotland, Dec. 8.

Frome, Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

G.

Galloway, *New*, Magiſtrates and Council, Dec. 1. As we cannot entertain a doubt that the proceedings of ſeditious and tumultuous meetings have been inſtrumental in inflaming and corrupting the minds of certain of your Majeſty's ſubjects, and preparing them for the attempt, we truſt ſuch meaſures will be adopted as Parliament ſhall deem neceſſary for the ſuppreſſion of theſe meetings.

Glaſgow, Lord Provoſt, Magiſtrates and Common Council, Nov. 10.

———, Preſbytery, Nov. 10.

———, Royal Volunteers, Nov. 14.

———, Vice Chancellor, Rector, Principal, Dean of Faculty, and Profeſſors of the Univerſity, Nov. 17.

———, Conveener, Deacons of the Fourteen Incorporated Trades, and other Members of the Trades-Houſe, Nov. 24.

———, Phyſicians and Surgeons, Dec. 3. The Bills now pending in Parliament, in our opinion, will be inſtrumental in ſecuring the peace of the country.

Glamorgan, County, High Sheriff, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

Glouceſter, Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriff and Common Council, Nov. 28.

———, Mayor, Citizens and Inhabitants, Dec. 5. At the ſame time we reſt in the aſſured expectation that, as the prevention of practices which threaten the exiſtence of our moſt excellent Conſtitution, is the wiſeſt conduct of Government, and the exceſſes of the preſent time loudly call for vigorous reſtraints, ſuch regulations will be adopted, without delay, as may give energy to the Civil Power, and inveſt with thoſe conſtitutional means which will effectually check the growing evils of diſaffection and ſedition, and protect the welfare of the whole againſt the miſchievous machinations of the few.

———, County, Firſt Troop of Gentlemen and Yeomen Cavalry, Dec 8.

———, County, High Sheriff, Nobility, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

———, Dioceſe, Dec. 12. We cannot but conſider it as an awful and inconteſtible proof of the alarming progreſs which thoſe (*French*) principles have made amongſt ourſelves, and an abundant juſtification of the wiſdom of the Legiſlature in deviſing other and more effectual means than the preſent laws afford, both for the better ſecurity of your Majeſty's Perſon, and for the ſuppreſſion of thoſe tumultuous and illegal meetings, where the ſacred name of liberty is uſed only as a cloak of maliciousneſs, and where the preachers of ſedition

dition conceal from the deluded multitude their deſigns of ſubverting the Conſtitution, under the ſpecious pretence of reforming it.

Goſport and *Alverſtoke*, Inhabitants, Dec. 1. Admire the wiſdom of the Legiſlature in taking ſuch meaſures for the protection of your Majeſty in future, as thoſe wherein both Houſes of Parliament are now engaged.

Granpound, Mayor, capital Burgeſſes, Freemen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

Grantham, Aldermen, Comburgeſſes, Burgeſſes, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec 1. We deſire to expreſs our thankful acknowledgments of that ſalutary proviſion which your Majeſty, in your wiſdom and paternal care of your people, has made againſt the growing evils with which the late ſeditious aſſemblies threaten the peace of Government and the happineſs of all.

———Volunteer Infantry, Dec. 12. We obſerve, with heartfelt ſatisfaction that neceſſary precautions are about to be taken, for preventing the attendant evils of ſedition and treaſon, and we concur in opinion, that all laws adopted for due ſubordination are in no wiſe diminiſhing, but ſecuring to us our inalienable rights and privileges, and are alſo additional proofs of your Majeſty's paternal regard and affection for your people.

Graveſend and *Milton*, Mayor, Jurats, and Common Council, Dec. 3.

Greenock, Volunteers, Nov. 28. We truſt in the wiſdom and firmneſs of the Legiſlature to enact ſuch laws as will effectually reſtrain that ſpirit of ſedition already too prevalent; and we highly diſapprove of the conduct of thoſe men, who appearing inſenſible of the dangers ariſing from ſuch a ſpirit, may thereby be the authors of much miſchief.

———, Magiſtrates and Council, Dec. 1.

Grimſby, Great, High Steward, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Common Council, Free Burgeſſes, Freeholders and Houſeholders, Dec. 12. We truſt in the wiſdom of Parliament to make ſuch laws as may beſt tend to preſerve the life of our beloved Sovereign, and our glorious Conſtitution.

———, Corporation of Free Burgeſſes, Dec. 12. We moſt humbly requeſt that your Majeſty, with the advice of your Parliament, will be pleaſed to frame ſuch laws as will in future prevent the daring and treaſonable attempts of a deſperate and inſidious banditti, who aim at the ſafety of your Majeſty's moſt ſacred Perſon, and with that the total deſtruction of our great, precious, and unparalleled Conſtitution.

Guernſey, Lieutenant Governor and the States, Nov. 28.

Guildford, Mayor, High Steward, Recorder, Magiſtrates, Approved Men, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

———, Volunteer Company, Officers and Privates, Nov. 21.

H.

Halifax, Volunteers, Dec. 1.

———, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, Manufacturers and Inhabitants, Dec. 10. We are happy to obſerve that the wiſdom of Parliament is now engaged in forming ſuch laws, as we hope will ever ſecure your ſacred Perſon from the like atrocious violence, and effectually ſuppreſs all ſeditious meetings, tending to the deſtruction of public peace and ſecurity.

Hallamſhire, Maſter, Wardens, Searchers, Aſſiſtants and Commonalty of the Company of Cutlers; the Collector for the Town of Sheffield, and his Aſſiſtants; Free Burgeſſes and Truſtees; the twelve capital Burgeſſes, and Commonalty of the Town and Pariſh of Sheffield; the Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, Manufacturers, and other reſpectable Inhabitants, Nov. 28.

Hamilton, Preſbytery, Dec. 8.

Hangweſt, Houſeholders, Dec. 26. Beg leave to expreſs to your Majeſty our utmoſt abhorrence of the late daring outrage againſt your Majeſty's royal Perſon, and of all ſeditious meetings. And alſo our confidence in the wiſdom of Parliament, for adopting ſuch meaſures as may defeat any deſign againſt our happy Conſtitution.

Harwich, Mayor, Aldermen, and capital Burgeſſes, Jan. 23. The meaſures which the wiſdom of the Legiſlature has thought proper to adopt, we ardently hope and pray will tend to the better ſecurity of your Majeſty's Perſon, and to the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom.

Haſtings, Mayor, Jurats and Commonalty, Nov. 21. In contemplating this atrocious act, we cannot but conſider it as the dreadful effect of inflammatory publi-

publications and seditious assemblies, which have a direct tendency to destroy at once all the relative advantages of protection and obedience. We rejoice to hear that the vigilant spirit of the Legislature has taken the most effectual means to correct and restrain these disgraceful excesses; the inseparable companions of the phrenzy of liberty, and the licentiousness of innovation.

Hastings, Rape of, Yeomanry, Cavalry, Volunteers, Nov. 21. We will do all in our power, both in our civil and military capacities, to forward so desireable an end (*peace*); and in particular, by watching over and repressing all tumultuous and illegal assemblies or convocations, projected by the enemies of our most excellent Constitution, and who, on whatever pretexts they may act, are either concealedly or avowedly the foes of law and liberty well understood.

Haverford West, Mayor, Aldermen, Common Council, Burgesses, and Inhabitants of the Town and County, Dec. 5.

Havering Bower, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 26. Permit us, Sire, to express our approbation of the Bills adopted by the wisdom of Parliament to prevent treasonable insults in future to your royal Person, and for the suppression of seditious meetings.

Helston, Mayor, Aldermen, Freemen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

———, Volunteers, Officers and Privates, Dec. 19.

Henley-upon-Thames, Mayor, High Steward, Recorder, Aldermen, Bridgemen, Burgesses, and principal Inhabitants, Dec. 19. Should the existing laws be found insufficient for the above purpose, we trust that the Legislature will enact such further laws for the security of the Constitution, and of your Majesty's Person, as in their wisdom they shall think necessary.

Hereford, Diocese, Dec. 10. We think ourselves bound to instil into the minds, committed to our care, the best and genuine public spirit, obedience to the laws, which prescribe the duty of subjects, and to such further improvement of those laws, as shall be deemed necessary by your Majesty, and the great Council of the nation, for preventing of the like alarming national disgrace and ruin.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy and Freeholders, Dec. 12. We trust to the wisdom of the Legislature to strengthen every constitutional safeguard of a life sacred in the eye of the law, venerable by the example of its virtues, and, at this eventful crisis, essential to our national security.

———, Mayor, Aldermen, and chief Citizens, Dec. 12.

Hertfordshire, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We spare ourselves the pain of reciting, and your Majesty of recollecting the wicked arts by which this influence has been produced on weak minds by designing and ambitious men. The scandalous misrepresentations which have been practised to seduce the unwary, the criminal hopes instilled into the idle and profligate, all aiming at one and the same object, the degradation and extinction of monarchy, and the subversion of our established Constitution in Church and State.

———, Mayor, High Steward, Recorder, Alderman, and Inhabitants, Nov. 28. We cannot consider this attempt levelled solely at the life of our Sovereign, endeared to us by his many public and private virtues, but at the existence of monarchy itself; and while we abhor such dastardly, though desperate assassins, we feel the most anxious alarm at the danger which threatens the internal peace and welfare of the country: but we trust and sincerely hope, that our happy form of Government will ever find protection against mischievous or misguided men, who, by anarchy and confusion, may aim at the total overthrow of all order and government, and the annihilation of every blessing we enjoy under your Majesty's mild and auspicious reign.

Heydon, Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs and Burgesses, Nov. 28.

Kingham, Dereham, Loddon and *Clavering*, &c. Troop of Cavalry, Jan. 27. Whilst we lament the fatal delusion that led these atrocious offenders to such an outrageous conduct, we cannot avoid to express our abhorrence of those seditious proceedings which naturally led to this wick d attempt to overturn our happy Constitution, by such an attack on the Executive part of it.

Honiton, Portreeve, Bailiff and principal Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

———, From the same place, Dec. 5. After having so lately expressed to your Majesty our indignation and abhorrence of the late most atrocious outrages and

and treasonable insults offered to your sacred Person, we should not again have presumed to approach your Royal presence, had we not found, from information, that the baneful influence of the societies, which have been established in several parts of this kingdom, exciting in the minds of the people discontent and sedition, where peace and loyalty had before resided, has reached our before united town; and that the friends of these societies have been secretly and partially handing from door to door, amongst particular classes of the inhabitants, a paper, purporting to be a Petition to your Majesty, praying an immediate and abrupt conclusion to the War, in which, from necessity, this nation is involved; and your Majesty's interference against passing the Bills now pending in Parliament, for insuring the safety of your Royal Person, and the preventing seditious assemblies, with a design of imposing it on your Majesty as the Petition of the principal inhabitants of this loyal town, and, with an audacity equal to the darkness of their own views, refusing its production to your Petitioners, when convened by public notice by the chief officer of this borough, for the purpose of taking it into consideration.

Horsham, Bailiffs, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Huddersfield, Inhabitants, Dec. 10. We contemplate with pleasure the measures now pursuing in Parliament for more effectually restraining the licentious freedom of turbulent and seditious men.

Hull, Volunteers, Dec. 26.

Huntingdon, Mayor, Recorder, and Aldermen, Nov. 21. We take this opportunity of expressing our hopes, that the wisdom of Parliament will frame such laws as may be adequate to check seditious assemblies, and to prevent in future such atrocious attempts.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

———, County, Volunteer Cavalry, Dec. 1. Convinced, as we are, of the dangerous tendency of these harangues, by which seditious demagogues have of late endeavoured to irritate and mislead the public mind, permit us, Sire, with all due humanity, to express our satisfaction at the measures proposed by the wisdom of your Parliament for the suppression of an evil so alarming; measures which can only be reprobated or feared by the abettors of such insidious revolutionists.

Hythe, Mayor, Jurats and Commonalty, Dec. 5. We cannot too fully declare our sentiments, that such an outrage is also an attack upon our religion, our laws, and our liberties.

I. J.

Jedburgh, Provost, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 3. We most heartily concur in the measures now taking by both Houses of Parliament to suppress such illegal and unconstitutional meetings as, no doubt, led to the late attack upon your Majesty's Person.

Jersey, States, Dec. 12.

Ilminster, or Second Troop of Somerset Yeomanry Cavalry, Dec. 5. From a crafty and subtle set of people, who are in the habits of holding societies, and misrepresenting affairs to their followers, by which the weak and unwary are misled, proceed these outrages and unprovoked insults, with a view to injure the best of Kings, subvert the best Government, and destroy the most happy and glorious Constitution now existing under the Heavens.

Inverary, Magistrates and Council, Nov. 21.

Inverbervie, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 5. Request that speedy and effectual measures may be devised to prevent such horrible and atrocious attempts for the future; and we assure your Majesty that we are firmly determined, by all the means in our power, to discourage and prevent all seditious and unlawful publications, and suppress such abominable practices and assemblies, and to discountenance and discover the authors thereof.

Inverness, Provost, Magistrates, and Council, Nov. 28.

———, County, Freeholders, Commissioners of Supply, Justices of Peace, and Heritors, Dec. 3.

———, Presbytery, Dec. 19.

———, Volunteers, Dec. 26.

 Ipswich,

Ipswich, Bailiffs, Burgesses, and Commonalty, Nov. 21. They have contemplated, with real concern, the publication of principles, disloyal and seditious, by a factious few, tending to degrade the English character, followed by practices disgraceful to the English name.

Irvine, Magistrates and Counsellors, Nov. 28.

———, Presbytery, Dec. 3.

K.

Kent, Offices and Privates of the Volunteer Yeomanry Infantry, Dec. 19.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, Yeomen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, &c. Not in the Gazette. See Index, Art. *Kent*.

Kidderminster, Bailiff, Aldermen, Common Council, and Inhabitants. Dec. 5.

Kilmarnock, Magistrates and Council, Nov. 28.

Kincardine, County, Freeholders, Justices of Peace, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors, Nov. 21. We do assure your Majesty of our firm and determined resolution, not only to discourage, prevent and suppress, by every means in our power, all seditious and unlawful publications, practices, or assemblies, and to discountenance and discover the authors thereof.

Kinghorn, Provost, Magistrates, and Council, Nov. 28. We trust that the Bills now depending in Parliament, for suppressing seditious Meetings, will effectually check those unlawful combinations, that are so destructive to the peace and welfare of society.

Kingston-upon-Hull, Mayor, Recorder, and Alderman, Nov. 21.

————————, Trinity House, Guild, or Brotherhood, Nov. 21.

————————, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 26.

———*upon-Thames*, Bailiffs, High Steward, Recorder, and Freemen. Nov. 28.

———, and *Richmond*, Volunteer Yeomanry, Dec. 5. Highly approving the measures taken by the Legislature for the better protection of your Majesty's most sacred Person, and for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies, that serve only as an introduction of French principles, which every true Englishman must utterly abhor.

Kinross, County, Freeholders, Justices of Peace, Commissioners of Supply and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

Kirby, in Kendal, Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses, Nov. 28.

Kirkaldie, Presbytery, Dec. 8.

Kirkcudbright, Magistrates and Council, Nov. 28.

—————, Presbytery, Nov. 28.

—————, Stewarty, Justices of Peace, Freeholders, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors, Dec. 1.

Kirkintilloch, Magistrates and Council, Jan. 5.

Knaresborough, Inhabitants and Vicinity, Nov. 24. We deeply regret the too evident truth, that there has long existed a dangerous combination of discontented and daring men, who have had recourse to every machination, and at last even to violence, at once to dethrone your Majesty, and subvert the Constitution of this kingdom.

——————, Volunteer Foresters, Dec. 12. We rely with confidence on the wisdom of Parliament, that some laws will be enacted for the better security of your Majesty's Person and Government, and also for more effectually preventing seditious assemblies, where attempts are made to involve this country in all the miseries that anarchy and confusion can produce.

L.

Lanark, Provost, Magistrates, Council and Deacons of Crafts, Nov. 28.

———, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, Commissioners of Supply, Justices of Peace and Heritors, Dec. 3. We rely on the wisdom of Parliament for adopting such measures as will in future prevent the repetition of outrages of a similar nature.

———, Presbytery, Dec. 8.

Lancaster, Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, Nov. 21. Our hearts shrink with horror from those wicked and atrocious principles, hatched by the zealots

of

of confusion, to subvert the peace of society, and all good government: and we think it high time for the authority of laws to interpose in preventing their dangerous associations. And we do most solemnly pledge ourselves to your Majesty, both individually, and in our corporate capacity, to discourage and suppress, as much as in us lies, the propagation of all levelling and seditious doctrines.

Lancaster, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders and Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

Landaff, Diocese, Dec. 19.

Langport, Major Commandant, Officers and Corps of Volunteers, Dec. 1. When we contemplate this horrid design, open yet malicious, daring and yet insidious, originating from the violent harangues and artful misrepresentations of the enemies of order and government, and instilled into the minds of a profligate set of wretches for the destruction of your Majesty's sacred Person, and the subversion of our Constitution, we are struck with horror, &c. Having long viewed the progress of dangerous and factious principles disseminated among your Majesty's subjects, we feel at this alarming crisis no small degree of pleasure in the seasonable and judicious interposition of the Legislature; to stem the torrent of treason threatening to break down the bounds which policy, law and nature have prescribed, for the preservation of Kings and established Communities.

Latherton, Inhabitants, Jan. 9. We are likewise determined to oppose to the utmost those flagitious men, who, by wicked and sinister arts, mislead and carry away from their duty the thoughtless and ignorant part of your Majesty's subjects.

Lauder, Presbytery, Dec. 8. We trust that the Legislature in their wisdom will take such measures as, under Divine Providence, will give every possible security, that your Majesty's precious life will in future be effectually protected against the secret or open machinations of the enemies of our country.

Launceston, Mayor, Aldermen, Free Burgesses, and principal Inhabitants, Nov. 14.

———, St. Mary Magdalen Parish, Minister and Inhabitants, Nov. 14.

Leeds, Mayor, Aldermen, and Assistants, Nov. 28.

———, Corps of Volunteers, Dec. 1.

———, Inhabitants, Dec. 10. We rely with confidence that such measures will be adopted by the wisdom of the Legislature, as may effectually suppress those seditious meetings, where it appears to us that attempts are made to involve this country in all the miseries which anarchy and confusion can produce.

Leghorn, Consul and Members of the Factory, Jan. 23.

Leicester, Mayor, Bailiff, and Burgesses, Nov. 21.

———, Loyal Corps of Volunteer Infantry, Nov. 21.

———, County, Sheriff, Noblemen, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 10.

Leith, Magistrates, Ministers, and Incorporated Societies, Nov. 17.

———, Volunteers, Nov. 21.

Leominster, Bailiff, Chief Steward, Recorder, capital Burgesses, and principal Inhabitants, Dec. 12. Permit us to express our joy at finding that the infamous societies and seminaries of sedition and treason in the metropolis, are now become the subject of Parliamentary discussion, which we hope will terminate in enacting such laws as will in future effectually shield your Majesty from similar treachery and insolence.

Lewes, St. Thomas and Southover, Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

———, Inhabitants, Householders, Dec. 12.

Lincoln, Mayor, Sheriffs, and Citizens, Nov. 28.

———, Diocese, Dec. 5.

———, County, Subjects of, Dec. 10. We confidently trust in the wisdom and exertions of Parliament for the preservation of our beloved Sovereign, and the security of our glorious Constitution.

Linlithgow, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, &c. Jan. 19. We will use our most zealous endeavours, each in our different stations, to carry into effect the laws enacted by the wisdom of the Legislature for the preservation of your Majesty's person, and the prevention of seditious meetings.

Lisbon, Deputy, Consul General, and Factory, Jan. 10.

Liskeard, Mayor, Recorder, Capital Free Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. We flatter ourselves with the hope, that through the measures now under consideration of your Majesty's two Houses of Parliament, aided by the zeal and activity of every good and loyal subject, the torrent of sedition, fed and encouraged by a few evil and designing men, will be effectually checked, and that your Majesty will soon enjoy the blessing of beholding the ill-informed returning with duty to your Majesty, and with submission to every legal order of Government.

Litchfield, Bailiffs and Citizens, Clergy and Inhabitants of the City and Close of the Cathedral Church, Nov. 28. Assuring your Majesty of our support in whatever constitutional measures the Legislature may think proper, to prevent a repetition of so dangerous an offence.

——— *and Coventry*, Diocese, Dec. 5.

Liverpool, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, Tradesmen and Inhabitants, Nov. 14.

———, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Bailiffs, and Common-Council-Men, Nov. 17.

Lochmaben, Magistrates and Town Council, Nov. 24.

———, Presbytery, Dec. 15.

LONDON, Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons, Nov. 6. See Index, Art. *London*.

——— *and Westminster*, Light Horse Volunteers, Nov. 7. See Index.

——— Merchants, Bankers, Traders and Inhabitants, Nov. 14.

——— Liverymen, Freemen, and other Inhabitants, Nov. 28. Feeling, as we do, that we cannot trace back such nefarious attempts to any other source than those dangerous and seditious meetings and publications which have multiplied in the metropolis and its vicinity, and poisoned the deluded minds of a multitude, till a proper sense of the blessings of the Government under which they live has been nearly extinguished: We cannot too gratefully own the paternal care of your Majesty, in your late most gracious Proclamations, and we confidently rely on the wisdom of the united branches of our excellent Constitution, in the present crisis, to apply such wholesome measures for its own security and permanency, as will long secure the safety of your Majesty's Person and Government, the privileges of the two Houses of Parliament, and consequently the happiness of a free and loyal people.

———, President and Fellows of the Royal College of Physicians, Nov. 28. Believing the execrable attempt to have received instigation from principles and doctrines maliciously diffused by men of some education, and of talents suited to better purposes, whose example, for that reason, may be the more pernicious, we, as a Society dedicated to a learned and useful profession, think that it behoves us to testify our sincere attachment to your Majesty's Person and Government, and our veneration of our excellent and happy Constitution, trusting that by the wisdom of the Legislature, the same may be preserved to our latest posterity.

———, Masters, Governors and Commonalty of the Art and Science of Surgeons, Nov. 28. We cannot but express our hopes that the national honour, which has been injured and insulted on this disgraceful occasion, will in some degree be vindicated by the exemplary punishment of criminals who are capable of committing such enormities, and by the adoption of such farther measures, as, by stopping the progress of faction and sedition, the wisdom of Parliament shall think best fitted for the preservation of your sacred Person, and in that preservation, the security of these kingdoms.

———, Tower, Justices of the Peace for the Liberty of, Dec. 1. We firmly rely on the wisdom of Parliament for enacting such laws as will tend to secure your Majesty's Person and Government, and preserve the peace, happiness and safety of the country.

———, Sion College, President and Fellows, Dec. 5. In contemplating the atrocity of the offence, we are led to impute it, if not to the premeditated design

design or immediate instigation of a deep confederacy, entered into by desperate and evil minded men against the peace and unexampled prosperity of this realm, and the permanency of its unrivalled Constitution, at least to the fatal operation of those doctrines, subversive of every principle, religious, moral, and political, which have been for some time past, by every possible means, disseminated with incredible industry and mischievous zeal among your Majesty's subjects, and which are evidently calculated to excite, concentrate, and call into action the natural restlessness and worst passions of mankind.

——, Protestant, French Refugee Churches, Dec. 8.

——, Apothecaries, Master, Wardens and Court of Assistants, Dec. 5.

——, East India Company, Dec. 5.

——, East India Stock Proprietors, Jan. 9.

——, Scottish Corporation, President, Vice-president, Treasurer and Governors, Dec. 5.

——, Bishop, Dean and Chapter of St. Pauls, and the Clergy of the Cities of London and Westminster, Dec. 10. To what other sources such atrocious acts as that which we now contemplate with so much horror are to be traced, it is not our peculiar province to inquire, but there is one cause which falls more immediately under our observation, and which we have too much reason to believe has contributed its full share to the production of these crying evils: we mean, Sir, publications teeming with infidelity, impiety, and blasphemy, with the grossest and most indecent insults on our divine Master, on his divine religion, on the holy scriptures, on every thing held sacred and venerable among men; most artfully accommodated at the same time to the understandings of the inferior and least informed orders of the people, among whom they have been disseminated with incredible industry, and have, it is to be feared, done incredible mischief, by eradicating out of the minds of too many, the fear of God and the dread of future punishment, (those two strongest curbs on the furious passions of mankind) they have prepared them for every enormity. To fear God and honour the King, are two precepts joined together in Holy Writ; they cannot be separated without danger; and we know by experience, by an example too dreadful and too near to us, that when once religion is gone, all legitimate authority is that moment at an end.

——, Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commissioners of Lieutenancy, Dec. 19.

——, Metropolis and parts adjacent, Inhabitants. Presented by Mr. Reeves. See Index. Art. *London*.

——, Artillery Company, President, Vice-president, Treasurer, Officers and Body, Nov. 21.

——, Dutch Church, Dec. 12.

——, Protestant Dissenters, Deputies from the several Congregations, Jan. 9.

——, Protestant Dissenting Ministers, Jan. 23.

Lothian, *East*, County, Nobility, Freeholders, Justices of Peace and Heritors, Nov. 14. We trust that your Majesty, with the advice of your Parliament, will adopt such measures as will effectually insure and preserve peace and good order over the whole of your Majesty's Dominions.

—— *and Tweedale*, Ministers and Elders of the Synod, Nov. 17.

Loughborough, Volunteer Infantry, Dec. 12.

Louth, Warden, Six Assistants, High Steward and Town Clerk, Dec. 26. By your Majesty's vigilant exertions, and the prudent interposition of the constitutional authority of Parliament, we trust the malignant attempts of inconsiderate and turbulent men will be ever counteracted, and public order and tranquillity secured to us and to our posterity.

Ludlow, Bailiffs, Corporation, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Lydd, Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry, Officers and Privates, Dec. 19.

Lymington, Mayor, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Lyme Regis, Mayor, Burgesses and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Lynn, *King's*, Mayor, Aldermen, and Council, Dec. 1.

——, Mayor and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

M.

Macclesfield, Mayor, Aldermen, Burgesses, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5. Convinced of your Majesty's ever vigilant and paternal solicitude

tude for the true interests of your people, we beg leave to express our warmest thanks for your Majesty's late Proclamation, assuring your Majesty that we shall, by every means in our power, co-operate with your Majesty's gracious designs therein conveyed to us, by counteracting and endeavouring to suppress all seditious and treasonable publications, and unlawful assemblies, calculated to mislead and inflame the minds of the ignorant and unwary, and render them disaffected to your Majesty's Person and Government.

Maidenhead, High Steward, Mayor, Recorder, Bridgemasters, and Burgesses, Nov. 14.

Maidstone, Mayor, Jurats, Common Council, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. Abhorrence of the continued attempts of wicked and evil-disposed persons to disturb the tranquillity of this your Majesty's kingdom, particularly by the multitude of seditious pamphlets and speeches, daily printed, published, and dispersed with unremitting industry, and with a detestable audacity, in contempt of your Majesty's Royal Person and dignity, and tending to the overthrow of the Laws, Government, and happy Constitution of these realms.

Marlborough, Mayor, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Maldon, Free Burgesses and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Malmsbury, Alderman, High Steward, Capital and Free Burgesses, Dec. 12. Declare our utter detestation of the attack by a deluded and infatuated mob, instigated by the secret machinations of seditious and traitorous abettors of our enemies, now in action for the purpose of the total overthrow of the envied and happy Government of this free country.

Manchester and *Salford*, Inhabitants of the Towns and Neighbourhood, Nov. 21.

——————, Inhabitants, Dec. 29. We have observed with concern that many daring societies have been instituted in these kingdoms for the propagation of seditious and rebellious maxims, and are sensible such an atrocious act of treason could never have been attempted against your Majesty's Person, had not the outrageous traitors been encouraged and incited by the violent and indefatigable exertions of those wicked societies.—We therefore observe with heartfelt satisfaction, that the wisdom of Parliament is now pleased to interfere in stopping the progress of such evil societies, and also in more effectually consulting the security of your Majesty's sacred Person.

Mann, Island of, Lieutenant-Governor, Council, and Deemsters, Nov. 28.

——, the Keys, Representatives of the People of the Island, Nov. 28.

——, Diocese, Dec. 26. It is with great regret and abhorrence we hear that there should exist in your Majesty's capital even a few individuals daring enough to avow principles, and perpetrate acts subversive of all order and subordination, and which menace the dissolution of all political union.

Margate and *St. Peter's*, Volunteer Infantry, Dec. 3.

Maybole, Magistrates and Council, Nov. 28.

Meigle, Presbytery, Dec. 26. When the spirit of disaffection hath manifested itself in an attempt so atrocious, and when seditious meetings are held to cherish sentiments, or broach doctrines treasonable in their nature, and subversive of all social order, we trust the Legislature will timely interpose its authority.

Melton Mowbray, Volunteers, Dec. 8. We feel ourselves peculiarly called upon in the present alarming and momentous crisis, when we find the disaffected and seditious holding public meetings, for the purpose of propagating principles and doctrines subversive of all order and good government.

Merioneth, County, Yeomanry, Troops, Nov. 21. With the deepest concern, we read of the late daring and treasonable insult towards your Majesty's most sacred Person, and have not with indifference observed, for some time, a turbulent inclination among the factious and disappointed part of your Majesty's subjects, to overturn the constitutional Government and Religion of your Majesty's dominions.

——, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 12. We express our grateful acknowledgments of the wisdom, expediency and necessity of those measures which, in consequence of your Majesty's recommendation, your two Houses of Parliament have thought proper to adopt for the better security of your Majesty's Person and Government, and for preventing seditious meetings and practices; and we rely with confidence on the vigour and firmness of the Executive Power for the due execution of the same.

Middleſex, Juſtices of Peace, Nov. 14.

———, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Nov. 28.

Milton, Volunteer Infantry, Dec. 19.

Minchinhampton, *Rodborough*, *Overing*, and Vicinity, Inhabitants, Dec. 12. We cannot but expreſs our deep regret, that the promulgation of dangerous opinions reſpecting your Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and the eſtabliſhed Laws, ſhould enjoy ſuch impunity. Truſting to your Majeſty's wiſdom for the remedy, or by recommending to your Parliament to provide ſuch as to their wiſdom ſhall ſeem proper, we are, &c.

Minehead, Conſtables, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19. We expreſs our confidence in the wiſdom and diſcretion of Parliament, that ſuch meaſures will be adopted as may effectually put a ſtop to the growth of thoſe principles which lead to the commiſſion of ſuch illegal and atrocious acts, and which, if permitted to exiſt, we deem it to be incompatible with the ſafety of this realm.

Monmouth, County, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Nov. 28.

Montgomery, High Steward, Bailiff, and Burgeſſes, Dec. 5. We firmly rely upon the vigilance and wiſdom of our Conſtitutional Repreſentatives, in Parliament aſſembled, for adopting meaſures completely adequate to the ſupport of the Royal dignity and ſafety of the Conſtitution againſt the direct or indirect attempts of unprincipled and ſeditious demagogues.

———, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

Montroſe, Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Council, Dec. 1.

Moray, County, Freeholders, Juſtices of Peace, Commiſſioners of Supply, and others, Dec. 26. We truſt that the meaſures which the wiſdom of Parliament are now adopting will effectually prevent, in future, any attempts of ſo heinous and atrocious a nature.

N.

Nairn, County and Town, Gentlemen of, Nov. 17.

———, Provoſt, Magiſtrates, and Town Council, Nov. 21. Sincerely truſt to the vigour and energy of the Executive Government, as well in bringing the guilty to puniſhment, as in ſuppreſſing all ſeditious and diſorderly combinations, tending to inflame the minds of the people, and leading them to commit the moſt atrocious criminal acts.

Newark upon Trent, Mayor, Recorder, Alderman, Gentlemen, Clergy, Inhabitants, Dec. 8. We lament exceedingly that there ſhould be in your Majeſty's dominions a ſet of people ſo depraved and infatuated by the diffuſion of ſuch diſorderly principles; but when we reflect what are the ſentiments of a few men in the moſt elevated ſituations, our wonder in ſome degree ceaſes that the weak and profligate ſhould be ſo miſguided by the miſchievous influence of example—We feel our minds much conſoled by the wiſe meaſures that have been adopted by both Houſes of Parliament.

———, Volunteer Infantry, Dec. 10.

Newburgh, Magiſtrates, Council, and Miniſter, Nov. 24. We truſt the power of the laws will be ſucceſsfully employed in bringing to ſpeedy and condign puniſhment the perpetrators and abettors of the atrocious crimes recently committed againſt your Majeſty; and we rely, with confidence, on the wiſdom of Parliament for the enactment of ſuch ſtatutes, as ſhall in future ſecure your Majeſty from a repetition of ſimilar inſults and alarms.

Newbury, Mayor, Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and other Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Newcaſtle upon Tyne, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Sheriff, and Common Council, Nov. 17.

——— *under Lyne*, Mayor, Bailiffs, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

——— *upon Tyne*, and the borough of *Gateſhead*, Volunteers, Nov. 28.

Newport, Iſle of Wight, Mayor, Aldermen, and Chief Burgeſſes, Nov. 21. It is with great ſatisfaction we underſtand that your Majeſty's faithful Parliament have already taken into their conſideration the means of more effectually guarding your ſacred Perſon from the future horrid attacks of thoſe deteſted and unprincipled wretches, who, deluded by treaſonable and ſeditious ſocieties, and under ſpecious pretence of Reform, would deſtroy the Monarchy, and ſubvert that

that free and invaluable Conftitution, on which the happinefs of your Majefty's people, and the good order of fociety fo effentially depend.

Newtown, Ifle of Wight, Jan. 16. We further thank your Majefty for having given effect to the falutary provifions of your Parliament, as well for the better fecuring of your Majefty's perfon in future, as for the fuppreffion of thofe feditious meetings, to which we afcribe the late commotions among the difaffected, with their flagrant confequences.

Nigg, Volunteers, Dec. 26.

Norfolk, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Nov. 28. Perfuaded as we are that the fentiments which actuated thofe atrocious mifcreants, are held in abhorrence by the great body of your Majefty's fubjects, we cannot help fearing that the natural effect of too free fpeculations on the nature of Government, muft, in the giddinefs of thefe times of anarchy and confufion, tend to impel ignorant minds to fimilar attempts; we therefore venture to hope that fuch temporary reftraints as the wifdom of the Legiflature may think themfelves juftified, by the fpirit of the Conftitution, to lay on the conduct of private perfons, may be fanctioned by your Majefty's approbation.

———, Rangers, Jan. 9.

Northampton, Mayor, Bailiffs, Burgeffes, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We look up with confidence to the wifdom of the Legiflature, in providing againft the caufe which we conceive has produced fuch daring atrocities, and which we cannot but confider to have been promoted by artful and defigning men, who, inimical to all Government, have affembled your Majefty's fubjects in, or near your metropolis, and, by feditious and inflammatory difcourfes, endeavoured to excite and prepare them to a refiftance of the Laws and Government of the kingdom. And it is with the greateft concern we feel it our duty to obferve, that until the period arrives when fuch meetings, and the promulgation of fuch pernicious doctrines and principles can be prevented, we have little fecurity for that fafety, honour, and happinefs, which we pray may ever attend your Royal Perfon, and to promote which will ever be the uniform wifh and ftudy of our lives.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, Dec. 5. An outrage of fuch tranfcendent enormity muft excite in our minds the moft alarming apprehenfions from the growth and progrefs of that execrable fyftem which aims at the extirpation of Monarchy itfelf, which threatens to loofen all the bands of civil fociety, to fubvert all legitimate Government, and to fubject our lives and property to the lawlefs and favage violence of popular defpotifm. We rely on the wifdom of the Legiflature to check the progrefs and avert the fatal confequences of thofe nefarious doctrines and projects, and effectually to provide for thofe moft important objects, the fecurity of your Majefty's Perfon and Government, and the preventing thofe feditious meetings and affemblies, in which we trace the fource and origin of every danger which threatens your Majefty and the nation.

Northfleet, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 8. It is a perfect conviction of the neceffity of every meafure which human prudence can fuggeft, even a temporary privation of part of our rights, in order effectually and ultimately to fecure the whole, which makes us rejoice in the great attention evinced by Parliament, at this awful crifis, to ftop the further promulgation of doctrines too openly avowed and too fedulouſly inculcated; doctrines fubverfive of all order, inimical to all religion, and tending only to create, through thefe happy realms, the moft abfolute anarchy and confufion.

Northumberland, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 10.

Norwich, Mayor, Sheriffs, and Aldermen, Nov. 21. We gratefully rely upon your Majefty's paternal folicitude for your people's welfare, and on the wifdom of the Legiflature, to adopt fuch fpeedy and falutary meafures as may tend to alleviate the diftreffes of the poor, to promote the negociation of an honourable peace, and to conciliate national profperity with conftitutional fecurity.

———, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, and other Inhabitants, Nov. 28. Exprefs our deep abhorrence of thofe wild and deftructive theories, that have caufed fuch crimes and miferies in a neighbouring country, have been artfully and induftrioufly difeminated among your fubjects of this realm, and have been the fource of the late daring violation of the Royal dignity, and the public

peace.

peace. Anxious for the preservation of our excellent Constitution, and of those high and valuable privileges, through which this nation has enjoyed such perfect freedom and felicity; but, aware that particular periods may call for particular exertions, if, from the unruly temper of the times, the laws existing are become incompetent to the protection of the State, we firmly confide in the wisdom and integrity of Parliament for such wise and temperate restraints as shall at once prevent any violent attempts against the established order of Government, and preserve entire the just rights and liberties of a loyal and affectionate people.

———, Diocese, Dec. 8.

Nottingham, County, Nobility, Gentry, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 10. We hold it our duty to express our wishes that the wisdom of the Legislature may provide such further securities as the wicked and unexampled practices to corrupt the loyalty of some of your Majesty's subjects may have made necessary. It is at the same time our anxious desire that measures may be adopted to suppress those unlawful assemblies, where the seditious harangues and the doctrines propagated, have a manifest tendency to encourage a violation of your Majesty's sovereignty, and the subversion of all legal Government, and to bring upon us those consequent calamities which have been so fatally exemplified in a neighbouring kingdom.

———, County, Corps of Gentlemen, and Yeomanry, Dec. 12.

O.

Okehampton, Mayor, Corporation, Clergy, and principal Inhabitants, December 12.

Orkney, County, Freeholders, Justices of Peace, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors, Jan. 23. That our justly beloved Sovereign had nearly fallen a sacrifice to the unconstitutional and detestable doctrines lately imported into these kingdoms, and so industriously disseminated by unprincipled and desperate men, who aim at overturning our happy and most excellent Constitution, has given us, almost the remotest of your Majesty's British subjects, the greatest alarm, and filled us with the justest indignation; and we confide in the wisdom and energy of Parliament in discovering the authors and abettors of that most flagitious attempt, and in providing a sufficient remedy against the like in future.

Ormskirk, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants and Neighbourhood, Dec. 10.

Oxford, Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, Nov. 21.

———, University, Chancellor, Masters, and Scholars, Nov. 25. We abhor those pernicious doctrines, which, disseminated under the pretence of Reform, have produced this violence and outrage: we detest them as principles of sedition, no less dangerous to the Constitution of our country, than to the life of your Majesty.

———, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

———, Diocese, Dec. 8. We cannot persuade ourselves that this was the atrocious act of a single traitor. Some have ventured to call it accidental. It appears to us to have been a preconcerted and deliberate act of a villainous confederacy. Your faithful Parliament, to whom the security of the whole community is intrusted, who are the most considerable, and the best informed part of your people, will meet the seditious spirit of the times with the proper restraint of a salutary law, effectually checking in future all unwarrantable and arbitrary attempts to destroy our excellent Constitution, and to rob us of those invaluable liberties, which this country, above all others, has so long and so happily enjoyed under that protection.

P.

Paisley, Presbytery, Nov. 21.

———, Magistrates and Town Council, Nov. 24.

———, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 8.

Peebles, County, Freeholders, Justices of Peace, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors, Dec. 15. We trust and hope, that the wisdom of Parliament will adopt

adopt such measures, as will in future prevent similar outrages; and also provide such remedies as will prove most effectual, and put a stop to such seditious meetings as have of late been held, where wicked and designing men instil poison into the minds of the ignorant and unguarded, for the malevolent purpose of subverting our happy and envied Constitution, and substituting in its place the popular despotism of France.

———, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 26. That the wisdom of Parliament will devise some effectual check to the now too evident designs of some societies, for unhinging our present Establishment, is most devoutly to be wished by every friend to his country.

Pembroke, County, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, Nov. 28.

———, Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council, Dec. 1.

Penryn, Mayor, Portreeve, Aldermen, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

———, Volunteers, Dec. 1. We will, at all times, readily and chearfully assist the Civil Power in the suppression of all riotous, tumultuous, seditious, and illegal assemblies, and all traitorous conspiracies and rebellions against the Laws and Constitution of our country.

Penzance, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 1. We earnestly hope that your Majesty, with the advice and assistance of Parliament, will speedily devise effectual means to restrain and suppress those daring assemblies and meetings, where sedition is openly promulgated, and the most inflammatory libels against your Majesty's Person and Government are industriously circulated, with a view to produce anarchy and confusion, and to destroy our most invaluable Constitution.

———, Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty, Dec. 8. We earnestly hope that your Majesty, with the concurrence of Parliament, will speedily devise such measures as will in future effectually prevent all seditious assemblies and meetings, where the most unremitting endeavours are practised to seduce your Majesty's faithful subjects from their allegiance and duty, to bring into contempt and disrepute the several orders of Government, and to subvert and overturn our invaluable Constitution.

Perth, Provost, Magistrates, and Council, Nov. 17.

———, Presbytery, Nov. 28.

———, Friendly Society of King's Freemen (*or persons, who by serving in the army have gained the freedom of exercising trades*), Dec. 1.

———, County, Noblemen, Freeholders, Justices of the Peace, Commissioners of Supply, and Heritors, Dec. 3. We rely with confidence upon the wisdom of Parliament to adopt such measures as may ultimately tend to prevent such atrocious attempts in future, and as may be the means of preserving internal tranquillity, by framing and carrying into effect such necessary, prudent, and salutary laws for the preservation and protection of your Majesty, and of our happy Constitution and Government, which in the present state of the country, circumstances may require.

———, Volunteers, Dec. 3.

Peterborough, Diocese, Dec. 19.

Peterhead, Volunteers, Dec. 19. We humbly trust, that such legal measures shall be adopted by the wisdom of Parliament, as may effectually protect your Majesty's Person against all future insults.

Plymouth, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Common Council, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We offer to your Majesty our heartfelt congratulations on your safety, for which we trust the Parliament of this kingdom will effectually provide, by such additional fences, as the times may be thought to require, and the Constitution of our country admit.

———, Dock-yard and Ordinary, Commissioner, Officers, Clerks, Artificers, and Workmen, Nov. 28.

———, Dock Town, and *Stoke Damerel*, Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

———, Volunteer Corps, Dec. 1.

Pontefract, Inhabitants, Nov. 28. We observe with satisfaction, that our Legislators are about to adopt measures for the suppression of such tumultuous and seditious meetings as have a tendency to obstruct it, (viz. the happiness of your Majesty's mild Government).

Poole, Mayor, Bailiffs, Burgesses, and Commonalty, Nov. 28.

Portsmouth and *Portsea*, Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Portsmouth,

Portsmouth, Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, Dec. 1.

Prescott, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 10.

Preston, Mayor, Aldermen, and Capital Burgesses, Nov. 21.

———, Gentlemen, Clergy, Manufacturers, Tradesmen, and Inhabitants, Nov. 28. Considering the dreadful consequences of riots of all kinds, we have seen with deep regret, and lamented that so many ungrateful subjects, living under a Constitution which is the admiration of the whole world, should be guilty of the daring outrages which for some time past have disgraced this happy island.

Q.

Queensferry, Magistrates and Town Council, Dec. 12.

R.

Ramsgate, Volunteers, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 10.

Reading, Mayor, Aldermen, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 7.

Renfrew, County, Yeomanry, Officers, and Privates, Dec. 1.

———, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Commissioners of Supply, Dec. 3. We embrace this opportunity of declaring our approbation of the Bills brought into Parliament for the better securing the liberty of your Majesty's Person and Government, and for the more effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies.

———, Provost, Magistrates, and Council, Dec. 3.

Ripon, Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty, Dec. 5. We cannot behold with supine indifference the insidious and alarming attempts of those enemies to their country, who seek to instil into the minds of the people of these realms a jealousy of that Government, which we are well convinced has no other end but the happiness of the subject, and who, by raising up shadows of grievances, existing only in the visionary theory of wild speculatists, under the pretence of Reform, evidently aim at introducing a baneful anarchy, in the room of a system of polity, the best and mildest that human wisdom ever could devise. We rely with confidence upon the wisdom of the Legislature for the adoption of such measures as will in future most effectually protect your sacred Person from such daring insults, and preserve public peace, order, and good Government.

———, Gentlemen, Clergy, Volunteers, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5. Beg leave most humbly to suggest our hopes, that your Majesty, with the advice of your Parliament, will adopt such measures as may most effectually preserve your sacred Person from future insults, and may be adequate to restrain the extreme and dangerous licentiousness of the ill-disposed.

Rochdale, Officers and Volunteers, Dec. 1.

Rochester, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Assistants, Nov. 21. While we declare our readiness to exert ourselves in a vigorous execution of the laws, for the discovery and suppression of all seditious and traitorous attempts against your Majesty's Person, or the Constitution of our country, we trust in your Majesty's paternal care to give a speedy effect to the benevolent intention declared by your Majesty (*in the Speech at the commencement of Parliament*) of using the means necessary for the restoration of peace: an event which, by lessening the present distresses of your people, and preventing the accumulation of farther burthens on them, will deprive the disaffected of their most powerful means of spreading discontent among your subjects.

———, Diocese, Dec. 10.

Romney, New, Mayor, Jurats, and Commonalty, Nov. 21.

———, Officers and Privates of the Company of Cinque Port Volunteers, Dec. 26.

Ross, County, Freeholders, Justices of Peace, and other Magistrates, Dec. 19.

Rothesay, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 8.

———, Adventurers in the British White Herring Fishery, Merchants, Traders, and Heritors, Dec. 26. We sincerely hope that the determined and necessary measures, ordered by your Majesty, and adopted by your Ministers, will have the most happy effect of overturning and disappointing every intention of promoting sedition, or disturbing the peace of the country; and that whatever audacious and wicked persons or party may presume to offer an insult to your

your Majesty's Royal Person, or attempt to endanger your precious life, may be utterly disappointed in all their wicked intentions, and at last be brought to suffer that punishment and ignominious death they so justly deserve.

Roxburgh, County, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Freeholders, and Heritors, Nov. 28. Actuated by these sentiments, we embrace this opportunity of expressing our entire and hearty approbation of the measures now under the consideration of Parliament, tending more effectually to guard your sacred Person, and prevent those seditious assemblies, whose proceedings have, for so long a time, filled the minds of your faithful subjects with just alarm, and threatened the destruction of every thing that is dear to us as men or Britons.

Rutherglen, Provost, Magistrates, and Common Council, Nov. 17.

Ruthin, Aldermen, Recorder, Common Council, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19.

Rutland, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 5.

Rye, Mayor, Jurats, and Freemen, Nov. 24.

——, Troop of Gentlemen and Yeomanry, Officers, and Privates, Nov. 24.

S.

St. Alban's, Mayor, Aldermen, Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We return your Majesty our most unfeigned thanks for the attention your Majesty has lately shewn to the domestic peace and welfare of these kingdoms, in the Proclamation you have issued, by the advice of your Privy Council, against seditious and unlawful assemblies.

St. Andrew's, University, Chancellor, Rector, Principal, and Masters, Nov. 14.

————, Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council, Nov. 17.

————, Presbytery, Nov. 17.

St. Asaph, Diocese, Dec. 26.

St. David, Precentor and Chapter of the Cathedral Church, Nov. 24. Expressing our satisfaction that your Majesty's Houses of Parliament are, in their wisdom, framing such ordinances for the suppression of seditious assemblies, as we hope may repress that spirit of innovation, which has gone forth of late, and threatens the well-being of the community.

————, Diocese, Dec. 10.

St. Germains, Portreeve, Freeholders, Freemen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 8.

Salisbury, Diocese, Dec. 5. Though for a few years past we have had but too just cause to lament the mischievous industry with which principles of the most pernicious tendency have been propagated throughout the kingdom, it might have been expected that the force of loyalty, in the great majority of good subjects, would already have been sufficiently strong to defeat the machinations of the turbulent and profligate enemies of their country, who, with an activity that supplies their want of numbers, labour to subvert a form of Government, which insures to every member of the community as great a share of freedom as is consistent with social order. But, when we now observe them, emboldened by impunity, starting out from the dark recesses of their seditious meetings, and proceeding, with unexampled insolence, to the most public manifestation of their detestable designs, it is high time to unite all the strength of the State, all the authority of the laws, and all the weight of individuals, in every station, and of every profession, to repress the wild infatuation.

Saltash, Mayor, Aldermen, and Free Burgesses, Dec. 8. We cannot for a moment conceive that such a nefarious attempt was either inspired by the principles, or directed by the advice of any of your Majesty's subjects acting as a body, but merely prompted by the momentary infatuation of a few misguided individuals, whose numbers must be as contemptible as their designs were iniquitous.

Sandwich, Mayor, Jurats, and Commonalty, Nov. 21.

Sanquhar, Magistrates and Council, Nov. 24.

Sarum, New, Mayor and Commonalty, Nov. 14.

Scarborough, Magistrates, Gentry, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We cannot but regard the late nefarious attack upon your Majesty, as having been concerted in those unconstitutional and illegal assemblies, which have been lately held in defiance of decency and order; to prevent similar meetings in future, we

most earnestly intreat, that such effectual measures may be adopted as your Majesty, assisted by the wisdom of Parliament, shall deem expedient.

Scilly, Islands, Council and Inhabitants, Dec. 10.

Scotland, Writers of the Signet, Dec. 8. In our humble apprehensions, it has become both necessary and expedient to adopt such measures as may not only prevent similar outrages in future, but tie up the hands of wicked and designing men from attempting, by seditious meetings, or otherwise, to overthrow the happy Constitution under which we live.

———, Solicitors of the Supreme Courts, Dec. 8. Signify our humble opinion that new powers and provisions are necessary for securing your Royal Person, and for counteracting that spirit of licentiousness and innovation, which, aided by the example of another land, and by the unremitting industry of profligate men in the encouragement of seditious meetings, has gone abroad among a part of the people.

———, Highland Incorporated Society, Dec. 8. We trust that the wisdom of Parliament will take such measures as may secure to us your valuable life, and the blessings of your Government. We should be ashamed of the name of Britons, if we thought that the late outrage received the sanction of any number of your Majesty's subjects beyond the deluded wretches who committed it; but believe us, Sire, that it does not; and that an infinite proportion of your subjects remain devoted to your person, and will risk their lives in support of your authority.

———, Dean and Faculty of Advocates, Dec. 8.

Antiquaries, Royal Society of Scottish, Dec. 19. We have observed, with the deepest concern, that the peace and good order of your Majesty's kingdom has for some time past been disturbed by a set of wicked and designing men; but we trust that the Bill now depending in Parliament, when passed into a law, will put an end to all seditious meetings, and effectually check the intentions of such evil disposed persons.

———, Episcopal Church, Dec. 19. We rely on the wisdom of your Majesty's Parliament for adopting such measures as may tend to the safety of your Royal Person, and to the order and good government of your kingdom.

Selby, Inhabitants, Dec. 1. It can only be attributed to the evil tendency of those clubs, and irregular societies, so evidently calculated to disturb the peace of your people.

Selkirk, County, Noblemen, Justices of Peace, Freeholders, and Commissioners of Supply, Nov. 28. Situated at a distance from the capital, we are removed from the knowledge of many of those attempts used by the seditious to inflame the minds of the ignorant, the unwary, and the idle: but with great satisfaction we perceive the two Houses of Parliament have turned their attention to the framing of regulations, which we trust will be brought to maturity, and prove an effectual bar to the evil designs of the enemies of the Constitution of Great Britain.

———, Magistrates and Council, Dec. 15. We observe, with indignation, the attempts made by the seditious to inflame the minds of the ignorant, the idle, and the unwary, and rejoice that the two Houses of Parliament have turned their attention to the framing of regulations, which we sincerely trust will tend to the support of our glorious Constitution, and the utter disappointment of its internal enemies.

———, Presbytery, Dec. 19.

Shaftesbury, Mayor, Capital Burgesses, and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Shrewsbury, Mayor, Corporation, and Inhabitants, Nov. 17.

Shropshire, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Nov. 28.

———, Troop of Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry, Nov. 14.

Somerset, Yeomen Cavalry, Sixth Western Division, Nov. 14.

———, Cavalry, Fifth Troop, Dec. 1.

———, Yeomanry Cavalry, First Troop, Dec. 8.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 10.

Southampton, Mayor, Bailiffs, Burgesses, and Inhabitants of the Town and County, Nov. 21.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 5.

Southmolton, Mayor, High Steward, Capital Burgesses, Recorder, Common Council, Town Clerk, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. It is with abhorrence we behold

hold the continued attempts of malicious and evil disposed persons to disturb the peace and tranquillity of the kingdom; and looking forward with fearful apprehension to the fatal consequences of that destructive poison which has been infused into the minds of some of the lower classes of your Majesty's subjects, by the dispersion of insidious and seditious writings, as well as the tumultuous assembling together of ill-advised and ill-intentioned men, we further beg permission to declare our firm and determined resolution to enforce whatever measures your Majesty shall, in your wisdom, direct to suppress the one, and defeat the evil designs of the other.

Stafford, Mayor, Aldermen, and Capital Burgesses, Nov. 21.

———, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Volunteer Cavalry of Gentlemen and Yeomen, and Freeholders, Dec. 3.

———, Shire, Potteries, Manufacturers, and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Stamford, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, Capital Burgesses, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

——— *Baron*, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Stirling, County, Noblemen, Freeholders, and others, Nov. 24.

———, Town, Volunteer Corps, Nov. 24.

———, Provost, Magistrates, and Council, Nov. 24.

———, Presbytery, Dec. 19.

Stockport, Gentlemen, Clergy, Manufacturers, and other Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Stranraer, Presbytery, Dec. 26.

Stratford upon Avon, Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses, Nov. 14. We further most humbly implore your Majesty, as the principal means of maintaining the blessings we enjoy, to suppress all seditious societies and clubs, which tend only to the support of irregularity and disorder, and to the subversion of your Majesty's good and gracious Government; and in this hope we are satisfied we shall be seconded by all your Majesty's loyal subjects.

Strathbogie, Presbytery, Dec. 26.

Stornoway, Volunteers and Inhabitants, Jan. 16.

Sudbury, Mayor, Aldermen, and Capital Burgesses, Dec. 5.

Suffolk, County, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Others, Nov. 21.

Sunderland, Volunteers, Jan 2.

Surry, County, Volunteer Cavalry of Gentlemen and Yeomen, Nov. 14. We have but too much reason to apprehend, that this nefarious attempt is one of the wicked doctrines authoritatively taught, and systematically embodied into a practical scheme, in the territories occupied by the enemies of your crown and kingdom. The same doctrines, with associations formed to regulate, and correspondences formed to spread them, have, with the most criminal industry, been disseminated in several parts of your Majesty's dominions; and although we, and a very great majority of your Majesty's subjects are totally averse to those doctrines and practices, yet we are not insensible to the mischiefs which may arise from the adoption of impious and traitorous principles, even by a small number of daring and desperate men.

——, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Sussex, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 3. We cannot, however, conceal our alarm, when we consider that so flagitious and daring an attempt to involve this country in all the horrors of anarchy and confusion, must necessarily have arisen from the progress of those dangerous principles which are so industriously disseminated by seditious meetings, societies, and publications. To prevent similar outrages, we rely on the wisdom of the Legislature for such further provisions as may at once secure to your loyal and faithful subjects their invaluable privilege of petition and remonstrance, both to your Majesty and to the two Houses of Parliament, and at the same time controul the licentious abuse of that privilege, and repress those proceedings, by which sedition and disaffection to our happy Constitution have been encouraged and promoted, for the purpose of subverting all security both of person and property.

Sutherland, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, and Inhabitants, Dec. 12. With the most earnest wishes that the Legislative Body may succeed in their patriotic endeavours for the prevention of such attempts in future; and that should the Bill for the suppression of seditious meetings and political conventions, now pending in Parliament, be approved by the other branches of the Legislature, it may also be sanctioned by the Royal Authority.

Sutherland,

Sutherland, County, Freeholders, Juſtices of Peace, Commiſſioners of Supply and Clergy, Dec. 19. It is with pleaſure, therefore, we obſerve your Majeſty's Parliament has loſt no time in deviſing ſuch meaſures as tend not only to prevent a repetition of the late inſults to your Majeſty's Perſon, but are calculated likewiſe to preſerve to all your Majeſty's ſubjects the ineſtimable bleſſings, which, in common with them, we enjoy under our happy Conſtitution of Church and State.

Sutton-long, Holbeach, and *Spalding*, or *South Holland*, Gentlemen and Yeomen Cavalry, Dec. 12. We feel indignation at thoſe doctrines tending to create diſcontent and miſchief, which have of late been diſſeminated by evil-diſpoſed perſons in ſeveral parts of your Majeſty's dominions.

Swanſea, Portreave, Aldermen and Burgeſſes, Dec. 1.

T.

Tain, Provoſt, Magiſtrates and Council, Nov. 28.

——, Volunteers, Dec. 12.

——, Preſbytery, Dec. 15.

Tamworthy, Bailiffs, Capital Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

Taunton, Loyal Volunteers, Nov. 14.

——, Inhabitants, Nov. 24. We behold with concern, Sire, a turbulent and factious ſpirit predominant in the hearts of certain ill-deſigning men, who, with a reſtleſs anxiety, are continually endeavouring how to turn aſide from their allegiance the lower orders of your Majeſty's ſubjects, and to inſtil into their weak and unguarded minds prejudices againſt your Royal Perſon. To ſuch nefarious machinations is the daring outrage to be aſcribed, which was irreverently and ungratefully levelled againſt your ſacred Majeſty, &c.

Thurſo, Volunteers, Dec. 10. The daring outrages of that day (*when his Majeſty was aſſaulted*) which appear to have been premeditated, clearly evince that the enemies of our glorious Conſtitution have not yet loſt ſight of their wicked purpoſes: we cannot, therefore, but approve of every exertion of the Legiſlative Body, and of the Executive Power, which may tend to defeat ſuch dangerous deſigns.

Tiverton, Mayor, Recorder, Capital Burgeſſes, Aſſiſtants, Gentlemen, Clergy and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. We hope the wiſdom of Parliament will provide the neceſſary means for the further and better preſervation of order, and the ſecurity of your Majeſty's Perſon.

Torrington, Great, Mayor, Corporation, Clergy, Gentry and Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

Totneſs, Mayor, Maſters and Counſellors, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Tregony, Mayor, Capital Burgeſſes, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 12.

Trinity Houſe, of Deptford Stroud, Maſter, Wardens, Aſſiſtants, and Elder Brethren, Nov. 17.

Turriff, Preſbytery, Dec. 3.

W.

Wakefield, Inhabitants, Nov. 28. We now rely with confidence, that ſuch meaſures will be adopted by the wiſdom of the Legiſlature, as may moſt effectually preſerve your ſacred Perſon, and, (by the total ſuppreſſion of all ſeditious meetings, which have a tendency to diſturb the tranquillity of your Majeſty's dominions) continue to your Majeſty's loyal ſubjects that happineſs which they have experienced under your benign and paternal protection.

——, Volunteers, Dec. 1.

Wallingford, Mayor, Aldermen, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Walſall, Corporation and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Wareham, Mayor, Capital Burgeſſes, Aſſiſtants, Town Clerk and Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Warrington, Inhabitants, Nov. 28. Convinced as we are, that there can be no ſecurity to your Majeſty's ſubjects, unleſs your Majeſty, the guardian of the laws, is in ſafety, we ſee with heartfelt ſatisfaction, the meaſures now taking by your Majeſty's two Houſes of Parliament for the protection of your Perſon and Government, and for the ſuppreſſion of all ſeditious ſocieties.

Warwick, Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen and Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Warwick, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants, Nov. 28.

Wells, Mayor, Corporation and Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Wenlock, Bailiff, Burgeſſes, and Commonalty, Dec. 19. We look up to Parliament with a moſt earneſt wiſh that by its wiſdom ſuch meaſures may be deviſed, as will hereafter render ſuch traitorous deſigns abortive, and afford an infallible ſecurity againſt attempts ſo truly alarming, and at the ſame time both dangerous to the public tranquillity, and in direct violation of the glorious Conſtitution, of which your Majeſty forms ſo important a part.

Weſtbury, Mayor, Corporation and Inhabitants, Dec. 26.

WESTMINSTER, Dean and Chapter, Nov. 28.

————, St. Anne's Volunteers, Dec. 1.

————, Dean of the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Lord High Steward, Deputy Steward, High Bailiff, Chief Burgeſſes, Burgeſſes, High Conſtable and Burgeſſes Aſſiſtants, Dec. 3. With theſe impreſſions we cannot but connect this violent and alarming outrage with the many ſeditious and tumultuous aſſemblies, held within this city, liberty and its vicinity, and with the abominable principles openly avowed there, and diſſeminated with the greateſt induſtry, tending to alienate the affections of the people from the Perſon of your Majeſty, and from the Conſtitution as by law eſtabliſhed. Under the apprehenſion that the exiſting laws may be found inadequate to the emergency of the preſent alarming criſis, and to the ſuppreſſion of evils of ſo atrocious a nature, not only affecting the ſecurity of your peaceable and loyal ſubjects, but ſtriking at the very exiſtence of our laws and liberties; and animated by the moſt dutiful ſentiments of gratitude and affection to your Majeſty, by the moſt ſincere reverence and attachment to our Conſtitution, ſentiments which we ſhare in common with the reſt of our fellow ſubjects; but feeling ourſelves peculiarly called upon to expreſs our apprehenſion for the tranquillity and ſecurity of this great city, we hope that the wiſdom of Parliament will, with all convenient diſpatch, make further proviſion for the ſecurity of your Majeſty's Perſon, and for the repreſſing and puniſhing ſeditious and tumultuous meetings.

————, St. Martin's in the Fields, Pariſhioners, Dec. 5.

————, Inhabitants of the City and Liberties, Dec. 5.

————, Ditto —— Ditto. The conſideration that the atrocious attempt which Divine Providence has graciouſly fruſtrated, happened in the metropolis where we reſide, and was committed while your Majeſty was in the actual diſcharge of one of the many important duties of your high office, impels us more eſpecially to renew the profeſſion of our firm and inviolable attachment to your Majeſty's Perſon and Government, to expreſs our determination to guard and protect thoſe invaluable pledges of our happineſs againſt every attempt of ſedition and violence, and renders us particularly anxious to diſcriminate the clamours and deſperate acts of a few miſguided miſcreants from the general ſentiments and conduct of your affectionate and faithful ſubjects. [N. B. This Addreſs was preſented by Lord Hood: the preceding one, by Mr. Fox. The paragraph quoted conſtitutes the only difference.]

————, St George's, Hanover Square, Officers and Corps of Volunteers, Dec. 8.

Weymouth and *Melcome Regis*, Mayor, Aldermen, Bailiffs, Burgeſſes and other Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Whitchurch, Mayor, Bailiff, Burgeſſes and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. It is our moſt earneſt wiſh and prayer, that ſuch meaſures may be taken as may prevent the repetition of crimes ſo dangerous to the peace and happineſs of this country, and that your faithful ſubjects may be effectually ſecured from the calamities which muſt inevitably enſue from the perpetration of ſo horrid a crime.

Wigan, Mayor, Bailiffs and Burgeſſes, Nov. 24.

——, Gentlemen, Clergy, Tradeſmen and Inhabitants, Nov. 24.

Wigtown, County, Freeholders, Commiſſioners of Supply, Juſtices of the Peace, and other Gentlemen, Dec. 3. We put confidence in the wiſdom of Parliament to adopt ſuch regulations, as may in future prevent ſimilar outrages, and diſappoint the deſigns of factious men of every deſcription, enemies to our wiſe laws and glorious Conſtitution.

——, Preſbytery, Dec. 3.

Wigtown,

Wigtown, Magiſtrates, Town Council, and Inhabitants, Dec. 19. We obſerve with ſatisfaction the meaſures purſuing by Parliament, for the better preſervation of your Majeſty's Perſon and Government, and for preventing the diſſemination of ſedition, meaſures rendered neceſſary, we lament, from the preſent ſpirit of the times.

Wick, Magiſtrates, Council, and Volunteers, Jan. 19.

Wilton, High Steward, Mayor, Recorder, Alderman, and Burgeſſes, Dec. 5.

Wilts, County, Nobility, Gentry, Clergy, Freeholders, and other Inhabitants, Dec. 3.

Winchelſea, Mayor, Jurats, Freemen, and Principal Inhabitants, Dec. 5.

Wincheſter, Mayor, Bailiffs, and Commonalty, Nov. 21.

———, Dioceſe and College, Dec. 10.

Windſor, Dean and Chapter of St. George's Chapel, Nov. 7.

——— *New*, High Steward, Mayor, Bailiffs, Burgeſſes, and Town Clerk, Nov. 7.

———, Pariſhoners, and Inhabitants at large, Nov. 21.

Wokingham, Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Wolverhampton, Inhabitants, Nov. 21.

Woodſtock, New, Mayor and Commonalty, Nov. 21.

Wootton-Baſſet, Mayor, Aldermen, Capital Burgeſſes, Clergy, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. We hold in the utmoſt deteſtation thoſe fallacious and deſtructive principles, from whence have originated the moſt cruel attacks on the ſafety of our Sovereign, the permanency of our Conſtitution, and our happineſs; and we conſider all thoſe, who by any means endeavour to diſſeminate or encourage ſuch principles among our fellow-ſubjects, as the enemies of public and domeſtic peace.

Worceſter, Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens, Nov. 21. On thus offering our congratulations to your Majeſty, we conſider ourſelves at the ſame time as congratulating our countrymen, conceiving that the All-wiſe Providence could not have beſtowed a greater bleſſing upon theſe kingdoms, than by fruſtrating the diabolical plots and machinations lately formed by a ſet of miſcreants, who have nothing to loſe, and whoſe only proſpect of emerging from their primitive abject obſcurity ſeems to have been the aſſaſſination of your Majeſty, and the illuſtrious Houſe of Brunſwick, and the murder, rapine, depredation, and plunder of the moſt worthy and valuable of your Majeſty's ſubjects, and the total ſubverſion of all order and Government. We therefore moſt humbly hope and truſt, that due meaſures will be taken for bringing to condign puniſhment the authors and perpetrators of this horrid outrage, for the ſuppreſſion of all ſeditious and unlawful aſſemblies, and for the effectual prevention of ſuch attempts in future.

———, County, High Sheriff, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Clergy, and Freeholders, Dec. 5.

———, City and County Yeomanry Cavalry, Dec. 8.

———, Dioceſe, Dec. 10.

Wrexham, Gentlemen, Clergy, Freeholders, Tradeſmen, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1. Requeſt that the Legiſlature would, in their wiſdom, deviſe ſome ſpeedy and adequate means to ſecure your Majeſty from ſimilar attempts in future, particularly by ſuppreſſing thoſe ſeditious aſſemblies, which, under pretence of redreſſing grievances, evidently aim at the ruin of our happy Conſtitution.

———, Yeomanry Cavalry, Dec. 1. Petition that the Legiſlature would ſpeedily deviſe ſome effectual means for your Majeſty's future preſervation, and for curbing that licentious ſpirit, which, under pretence of reforming abuſes, evidently tends to inflame the minds of the people, endanger the public peace, and eventually overthrow our excellent form of Government.

Wycombe Chipping, Mayor, Town Clerk, Aldermen, Bailiffs, Burgeſſes, and Inhabitants, Dec. 1.

Y.

Yarmouth, Great, Mayor, Aldermen, Burgeſſes, and Commonalty, Nov. 17. Impreſſed with this ſentiment, we earneſtly hope that the wiſdom of Parliament will provide the means of preventing, for the future, thoſe ſeditious meetings, which evidently lead to acts of tumult and violence, and tend to leſſen that reverence and affection which Engliſhmen feel for a free Conſtitution.

Yarmouth, Gentlemen, Clergy, Merchants, and Inhabitants, Nov. 21. We cannot but lament, that principles subversive of good order and Government should be so industriously propagated by the disaffected in this kingdom; and we humbly beg leave to express to your Majesty our most earnest wishes for the immediate adoption of such measures as Parliament, in its wisdom, may think effectual to suppress those turbulent and seditious meetings, which tend only to mislead and to inflame the lower orders of the people.

Yeovil, Yeomanry Cavalry, Dec. 1.

York, Mayor and Commonalty, Nov. 14. Whilst, as dutiful and loyal subjects, we offer our congratulations upon your Majesty's escape from personal injury, we deem it a part of the duty we owe your Majesty, our country, and ourselves, to beseech your Majesty to employ the most effectual means to procure a speedy termination of the present disastrous war; convinced, as we are, that under the distresses of the kingdom, the blessings of peace are essential to the preservation and permanence of our excellent Constitution, to the happiness of your Majesty, and the prosperity of the people.

——, Magistrates of the North Riding, Nov. 21.

——, Volunteers for the internal defence of, Nov. 28.

——, Archbishop, Dean and Chapter, Dec. 10.

——, County, Freeholders, Dec. 10. We rely with confidence on the wisdom of the Legislature, that some law may be enacted for the better security of your Majesty's Person and Government, and also for the most effectually preventing seditious meetings and assemblies, where attempts are made to involve this country in all the miseries which anarchy and confusion may produce.

——, County, Freeholders, Dec. 1. Not in the Gazette. See *Index*.

——, *West Riding*, Gentlemen and Yeomanry Cavalry, Dec. 26. Fully sensible of your Majesty's paternal anxiety for the interests and happiness of your people, we never entertained a doubt but your Majesty would rejoice at any opportunity of restoring to your subjects the blessings of peace, whenever peace could be restored on a basis of honour and security; blessings which, however inestimable they may be deemed, are not, as we apprehend, more likely to be obtained, either by a pusillanimous and ill-timed representation of distress, or the efforts of sedition and dissention.

——, ———, Southern Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry, Jan. 9. We feel ourselves called upon to express our utter abhorrence of those doctrines and principles tending to the destruction of that Government, as well as of all order and society.

RECAPITULATION.

From England, and its Dependencies —	405
From Scotland — — —	174
	579
Addresses of Congratulation only — —	363
Approving of the Bills, alluding to them and the state of the country, or recommending remedies —	216
	579
Addresses from Military Bodies in Great Britain —	90
From the Clergy — — — —	79

INDEX.

A.

ALDERSGATE Ward, 469, 498, 624
Aldgate Ward, 311, 542.

B.

Bakers, Meeting of, 125, 746
Bath, Petition, Information refpecting, 496
Bedfordfhire, Meeting, Addrefs, &c. 741
Bermondfey, Affociation, 555
Bookfellers, Printers, &c. 310
Buckinghamfhire, County Meeting, 136
Burke's, Mr. Edmund, Penfion, 168
Bread-ftreet Ward, 336, 359, 491
Bridge Ward, Meeting, 632
Bridport Meeting, 625
Briftol Meeting, 360
BILL for the SAFETY OF HIS MAJESTY'S PERSON, brought into the House of PEERS, 27—— Copy of, as firft introduced, 35——Second Reading, 42—Ordered to be Committed, and Minority on, 54. 109—Reported, 137——Read a Third Time, 171—Proteft againft, 312—Copy of, as paffed, 772
COMMONS—Read a Firft Time, 197.—Motion for a Committee of Enquiry, 197——Second Reading, 245. 313——Debate on appointing the Committee for Nov. 25, 382——Committee on, 508.—Report of the Amendments, 624—Third Reading, 709

For

For Preventing Seditious Assemblies, introduced into the Commons, 54—Minority on the Motion for leave, 89—Debate on a Motion for Adjournment, 139—Read a firſt time, 143—Copy of, as firſt introduced, 158—Motion of Mr. Curwen to adjourn for a week, 425—Minority on, 465—Committee upon, 478—Report, 544—Third Reading, 570—Amendments, 766

Lords—Introduced into, 621—Second Reading, 662—Minority, 697—Proteſts, 698—Committee on, 740—Read a third time and paſſed, 751—Copy of, as paſſed, 774

C.

Camberwell, Aſſociation, Reſolutions of, 310
Cambridge, County, 348, 626
Cartwright's, Major, Petition, 483
Caſtle Baynard, Ward, 355, 391
Chatham Dock, Workmen at, 336
Cheap Ward, Meeting, 242. 327
Clerkenwell, Meetings, 553, 554
Coleman-ſtreet Ward, 358
Collett's, Captain, Letter to Mr. Waddington, 360
Common Council, Reſolutions and Addreſs, 24—Minority, 314
Common Hall, Meeting, 306. 315
Commons Houſe of, Call of, 87
Cox, Albion, Letter from, 624

D.

Deptford, Merchants and Shipwrights, Meeting, 504
Dundee, Meeting, 635.

E.

Eaſt India, Quarterly General Court, 769
Edinburgh, Meeting, 633—Merchant's Hall, Do. 768
Erſkine, Hon. Henry, Correſpondence with the Faculty of Advocates, 637. 770.
Exeter, Meeting, 392.

F.

Farringdon Without, Inhabitants called, 190—Proceedings, 307
Friends of the People, Addreſs from, 636

G.

Glafgow, Meeting, 501
Grocers' Hall Meeting, 556
Gunmaker's, Do. 335

H.

Hampfhire, Meeting, 493
Hertford, County, Do. 194. 197
Huntingdon, County, Do. 555

K.

Kent, County Meeting, 640
KING, Infult to, announced in the Houfe of Peers, 1—to the Commons, 3—Particulars of, from the Newfpapers, 4—Evidence concerning, 7—Examination of the perfons apprehended, 17. 21. 168——Proclamation for the Difcovery of the Offenders, 21——Addreffes to, of both Houfes of Parliament, 22——Goes to Covent Garden Theatre, 21—Prayer and Thankfgiving for his efcape, 195

L.

Lancafter, Meeting of the Freemen in London, 551
Leicefter, Freemen Meeting, 195, 335
Lewes, Meeting, 502
LONDON, Light Horfe Volunteers Addrefs, 27
——— Affociated Livery, 119
——— Merchants, Bankers, and Traders, 24, 26, 191
——— Livery, 194
——— Common Hall, 306, 315
——— Journeymen of, 334
——— Merchants, Bankers, and Traders (Grocers' Hall Meeting) 495, 556
——— Meeting at the Paul's Head refpecting the fame, 632
——— Freemen of, 643
——— Loyal Inhabitants of, at the Crown and Anchor, 165

M.

Maidftone, Meeting of the Inhabitants, 332
Manchefter, Meeting, 746
Middlefex, County of, 244, 340

N.

Northumberland, County Meeting, 499
Norwich, Meeting at St. Andrew's Hall, 318
——— Petition to the House of Commons, 323

P.

Paisley, Meeting, 392
Perth, Meeting, 745
Portsmouth, Counter-Petition, Letter respecting, 655
Portsoken Ward, 468
Proclamation for the discovery of the persons who insulted his Majesty, 21
——— against Seditious Assemblies, 23
Protests against the Bills, 312
Publicans, United Society of, 306, 351

PETITIONS.

For the Bills. From Arundel, 562——Bath, 42, 139, 245, 422, 561——Buckinghamshire, 539——Bedfordshire, 700, 738——Colchester, 119——Chester, 507——Coventry, 562——Clerkenwell, 562——Chesterfield, 705——Edinburgh, 245, 660, 709——East India Directors, 505——Gosport, 362——Glasgow, 507, 540, 561, 623——Huntingdon, 418——Kidderminster, 568——London, Corporation, 313——Castle Baynard Ward, 539——Aldersgate Ward, 569——Leicester, 470——Liverpool, 507, 660——Leeds, 539, 660——Lewes, 564——Lincolnshire, 620, 656——Leith, 705——Manchester, 366——Newcastle-under-Lyne, 507, 569——Newark, 561——Portsmouth, 475, 655——Plymouth, 569——Paisley, 704——Perth, 705——Queensferry, 705——Rutland County, 560——Suffolk, 366——South Molton, 424——Southampton, 472, 560——Surrey, 474——St. Alban's, 543——Southwark, 543——Staines, 563——Winchester, 418—Westminster, Inhabitants, 470—St. Clement Danes, 470——Dean and Burgesses, 507——Yarmouth, 119, 245——Yorkshire, 621——York, 709

[Some of these places presented more Petitions than one. The amount of the whole is 65, and the number of Signatures, as far as stated on presentation, is 29,922.]

Against the Bills. Arundel, 562——Bristol, 365——Bury St. Edmund's, 418—Birmingham, 418——Bath, 475—Bridport, 562—Bedfordshire, 700——Chichester, 309, 540——Canterbury, 362 Chester 367——Corresponding Society, 368—Coventry, 417, 423—Colchester,

Colcheſter, 425——Cartwright, Major, 472, 483——Cirençeſter, 561——Cambridge County, 568——Dunſe, 424——Dartmouth, 424——Durham, 507, 660, 703——Dumbarton, 706—Dundee, 709—Exeter, 418——Edinburgh, 707, 739——Eaſt Monktown, 707——Frome, 660——Glaſgow, 540——Hythe, 470——Hampſhire, 507——Halifax, 568——Kilmarnock, 423——Kidderminſter, 568——Kilſyth, 570—LONDON, Merchants and Bankers, 395, 477, 564—Journeymen Taylors, 403——Publicans, 416——Farringdon Ward, 417——Aſſociated Tradeſmen, 418——Bakers, 418——Gunmakers, 472——Caſtle Baynard Ward, 475, 539——Alderſgate Ward, 475——Clerkenwell, 478——Weavers, 540——Bookſellers, Stationers, 543——Launceſton, 470——Lyme Regis, 472——Leiceſter, 472——Liverpool, 507, 659——Lymington, 507—Lancaſter, 569—Mancheſter, 417, 739——Norwich, 366——Newcaſtle, 393, 410, 660——Newport, Cornwall, 470——Newark, 472——Newcaſtle-under-Line, 472——Northumberland, 506——Nottingham, 560, 660——Portſmouth, 415——Paiſley, 417——Plymouth, 507, 660——Poole, 540——Reading, 362——Rye, 568——Rocheſter, 336, 471——Southampton, 366——Sheffield, 368——Southwark, 417 Stafford, 472——Sudbury, 563——Surrey, 565——Suffolk, 568 Sunderland, 621——Strathaven, 624——Warwick, 422——WESTMINSTER, Inhabitants, 473——Wrexham, 508——Wigtown, 706——Yarmouth, 424——York, 507, 621

[Number of Petitions, 94——Of Signatures, 131,284]

R.

Reading, Meeting, 349

Reeves's, Mr. Pamphlet attributed to him, 370, 378

Republicans and Levellers, Aſſociation againſt, 134

S.

Society, London Correſponding, Circular Letter, 37——Reply to Calumnies, 39——Proceedings, June 29, 1795, 90——Proceedings, Oct. 26, 98——Meeting called, 124——Proceedings, 125, 135——Addreſs to the Britiſh People, 330——Advertiſement reſpecting Barrow, 355——Declaration of their Principles, 389——Called to meet at Marybone Fields, 554——Proceedings, 643

—— for Conſtitutional Information, 767

Southwark, Meeting, 41, 124, 356

Stowmarket, Meeting of the Freeholders of Suffolk at, 631

Surrey, Meeting, 41, 244, 324, 346, 347

Suſſex, County, 190

Tower

T.

Tower Hamlets, Aſſociation, 333

W.

Waddington, Mr. Anſwer to Captain Collet, 360
Wapping, St. John's Meeting, 356
Weavers, Meeting, 352
WESTMINSTER, Inhabitants Meeting, 124, 189, 193——Meeting in Palace Yard, 232——Counter Petition, 352——St. Martin's in the Fields, 193, 306, 311, 325——St. James's, 193, 348, 467——St. Ann's, 311, 357——St. Clement Danes and St. Mary le Strand, 391, 466——St Paul's, Covent Garden, and St. Martin's le Grand, 468, 503——St. Margaret and St. John, 495, 505.
Wigtown, Meeting, 749
Whig Club, Extraordinary Meeting, 41, 120——Reſolution ſigned by, 243, 656——Extraordinary Meeting, 780——Declaration, 786
Wyvil's, Rev. C. Addreſs to the Freeholders of Yorkſhire, 551

Y.

Yarmouth, Meeting, 334
York, City Ditto, 496
—— County Ditto, 627